State of the ARTS

MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL

Winter 2025
January
February
March

News of the art world for all Montanans, provided by funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and the State of Montana

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT for the ARTS arts.gov

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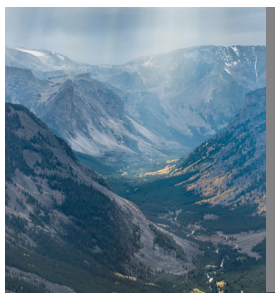

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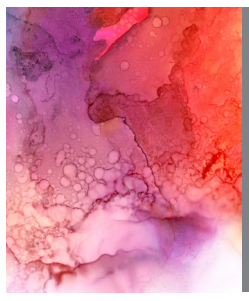


visual arts page 20

Artwork courtesy of Montana Arts Council

Many Miles to Cross: The Arts Council's Strategic Plan

Based on public feedback from across the state, Montana Arts Council has developed a road map for its work over the next few years. ***Learn more about the five-year plan...***

Read more, page 4

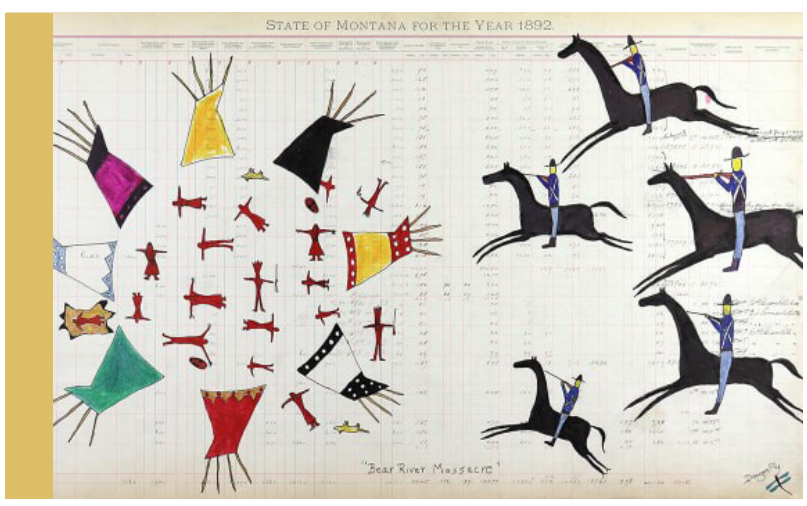
Art News Statewide

Michael Rohd, Jackie Vetter, Courtney Davis, and Kendra Mylnechuk Potter at a presenstion of *State of Mind* at the Montana Healthcare Symposium in Bozeman. *Photo courtesy of Bride Side Photo and Video*

The *State of Mind* Montana Needs Right Now

State of Mind was developed by a group of professional Montana artists, facilitators, and mental and behavioral health professionals in response to the troubling trends in Montana's behavioral and mental health outcomes. ***Learn more about State of Mind...***

Read more, page 10



Bear River Massacre. *Artwork courtesy of David Dragonfly*

The Life of David Dragonfly

Esteemed artist, storyteller, and friend, David Dragonfly has passed away. We honor his legacy and the indelible mark he left on the art world. ***Get to know some of his works...***

Read more, page 12

Photo courtesy of Tracy Sullivan

Celebrating 20 Years of Poetry Out Loud

Now, maybe more than ever, youth voices need to be heard. This year marks the 20th Poetry Out Loud, offering high school students the opportunity to participate. ***Check out the upcoming events...***

Read more, page 25

from the director

Krys Holmes
Executive Director
krys.holmes@mt.gov

Arch Allies

Along my daily dog-walk in the Arts Council neighborhood, one of my favorite spots is a tiny 1886 two-story granite shed—formerly a shop? A tiny carriage house? Its architectural details, both funky and refined, fill me with affection for the long-gone laborers who built it. The side door of this humble structure, leading right into the alley, is a small arched doorway topped with a keystone no wider than a laborer's hand-span. One hand-hewn rock that holds up an arch that supports a building that shelters the goods and materials of a whole life, perhaps a whole family's life reaching back six generations.

The work we do, in art, is that rock. The piano lesson that introduces a new mathematical system based on music theory, that inspires a kid to look at all the mathematical systems of the world differently, that result in innovations in space technology. The art history class that teaches a medical student to observe shapes and patterns more holistically, that leads to more accurate MRI readings. The young actor in a community theater who learns to tell a complex story with courage and humanity, who becomes a leader in his field because he both speaks and listens with passion.

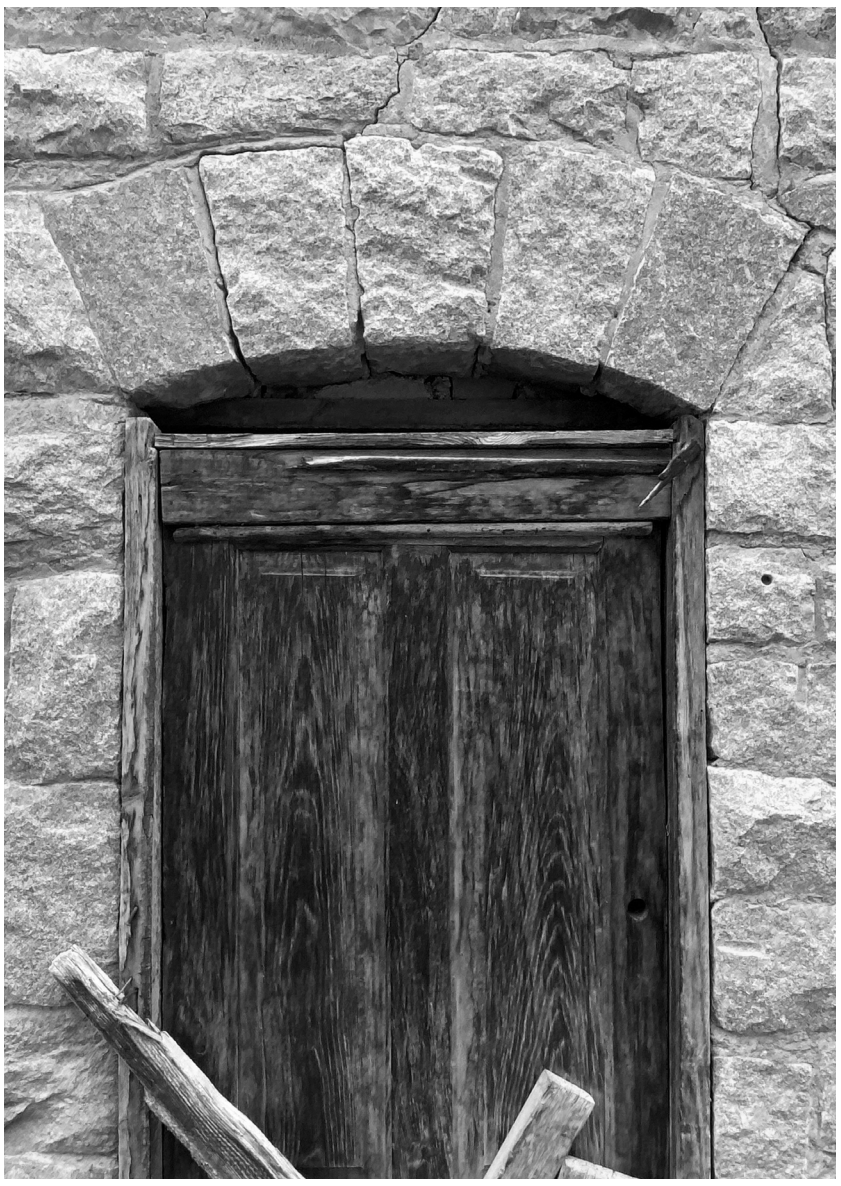


Photo by Krys Holmes

The theater project in a prison that allows an inmate to act out a drama of despair and redemption, that requires of him tremendous discipline and vulnerability, which allows him for the first time to build trust and to experience being needed by his team—which leads him to create, after release from prison, a network of formerly incarcerated actors who write and produce a nationally distributed, award-winning film.

All these stories are true. In all of them, art is the humble rock that works as the keystone to scaffold an entire infrastructure of growth, self-knowledge, and success in the world. You, doing the work of art in your community, are a keystone. You are not the pinnacle; you are not the spire. You are not building empires, you are building lives. And the impact you have may be so long-lasting that just like the stonemason who built this granite shed, you will never know all the lives you touch. (Does Handel? Does Van Gogh?)

This issue of *State of the Arts* is about relationships, bridges, alliances, partnerships – the connections that expand and amplify art and humanity. I've been hearing a lot these days, and you have too, about how disconnected and fractured America is right now. But are we? Or have we just been talked out of our relation with one another? Biology tells us we share 61% of our DNA with fruit flies - how different from one another can we be, really? In my 4,300 miles of road trips across Montana this year I saw people standing shoulder to shoulder holding up a world. Sure: like that archway, our stones are laid at angles to one another. That's where the strength lies.

A person could also use a factory-laminated header to support a doorway, but wouldn't you rather be a keystone? Isn't it also lovely the way other stones in the archway lean on each other to bring strength to the whole structure? This is good work. Have courage.

Krys Holmes, Director, Montana Arts Council

> "You, doing the work of art in your community, are a keystone."

State of the Arts Welcomes Submissions

State of the Arts welcomes submissions of photographs, press releases, and newsworthy information from individual artists and arts organizations.

Next deadline:

The deadline for submissions is February 15 for the Spring issue (April-June).

Please check with the Montana Arts Council for reprint permission.

Send items to:

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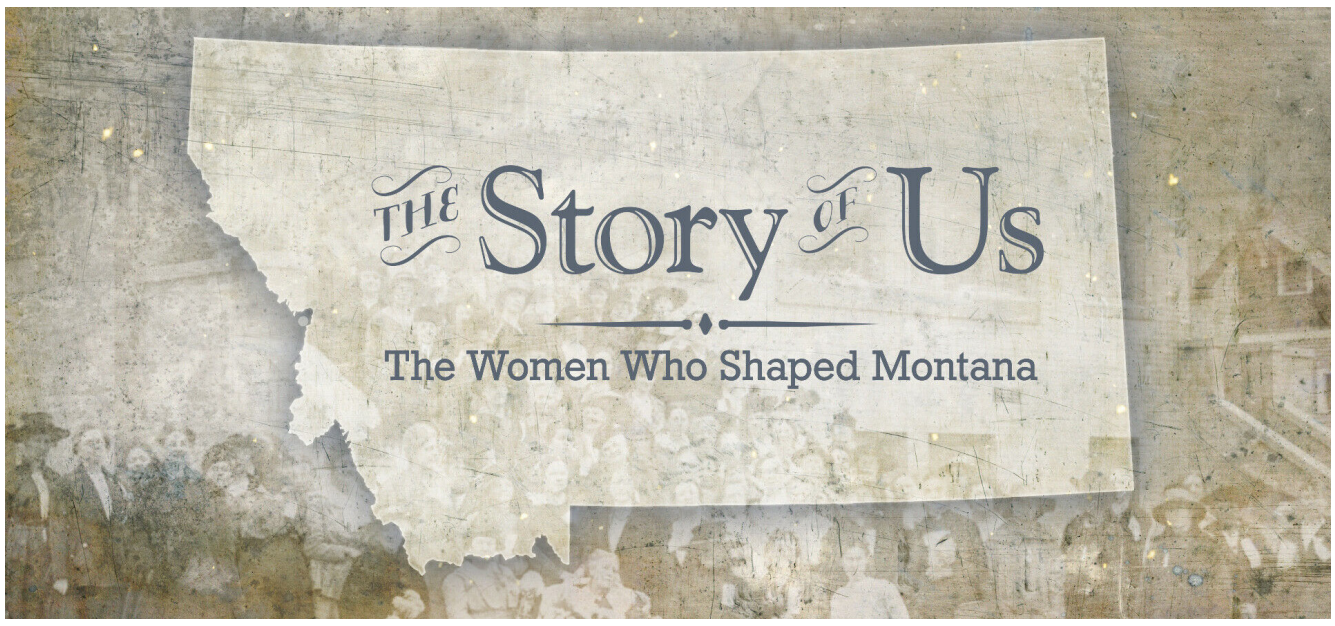
Subscriptions

State of the Arts is available free of charge upon request as a public service of the Montana Arts Council.

Roots in the Sky choir will debut a new choral and chamber orchestra piece focused on the impact of wildfires in Montana.



"The Women who Shaped Montana" premiered at The Myrna Loy in Helena, and aired on PBS on December 3, 2024.

Tiny Grants **Build Mighty Bridges**

By Krys Holmes

Never underestimate the power of microgrants. Since the mid-90s, the Montana Arts Council has awarded quick-turnaround small grants that have had an outsized impact across Montana. Strategic Investment Grants are $1,000 or less, require only a simple application, and are awarded monthly.

A filmmaker buys a new camera to complete a documentary. A Montana band attends a national booking festival and lands an agent. A community theater hosts a writing conference. A small museum creates a new traveling exhibit. Each year, 50-55 projects come to fruition because the Arts Council fans these micro-grants out across the state.

This fiscal year—since July 1, 2024—MAC has received so many applications the entire year's budget of $55,000 is already committed. (You can soon apply for projects that begin July 1, 2025.)

This year Stevensville artist Meghan Hanson purchased a cargo trailer to safely store and transport large artworks to exhibits and art fairs across the Intermountain West. Filmmaker Kim Hogberg's grant went to host two screenings of the historical documentary film, "The Story of Us: The Women Who Shaped Montana," now viewable on Montana PBS.

The Travelers' Rest Preservation and Heritage Association, in Lolo, received funds for a new traveling exhibit called "The Cabinet of Natural History," featuring 1930s-era hand-colored lithographic plates depicting wildlife commonly seen near the state park. Community-based vocal group Roots in the Sky, conducted by Andrew Major, will get help for staging two Bozeman performances of "The End of Rain," a new multimedia project for chamber orchestra, choir, and landscape photography created around real experiences of wildfire victims.

That's just a few examples of this extremely popular grant program that builds careers, helps make connections, and forges new possibilities for arts and culture in Montana.

The artwork of Meghan Hanson often embraces the wildlife and landscapes of Montana. Now, her new trailer will help transport that work to exhibits and fairs statewide.

To find out more, check out this page: art.mt.gov/sig.

Or email Brian Moody: brian.moody2@mt.gov

PVP and SSO Deadlines

General operating support funding applications via Public Value Partnership (PVP) and Statewide Service Organization (SSO) grants will be available in early February. The two-year funding cycle is July 1, 2025-June 30, 2027. The deadline for application is 11:59pm on March 27, 2025 (Thu).

Many Miles to Cross:

The Arts Council's Strat

By Krys Holmes

A statewide survey with 900 responses (and 52 pages of comments!) plus 13 community meetings, countless personal conversations and 4,350 miles of Montana roads led us to a long sought-for destination: the Montana Arts Council's new Strategic Plan, the roadmap for our work over the next five years.

You can read or download the full strategic plan at art.mt.gov, but here's the most important thing—community members, arts organizations, and artists all asked MAC to focus on four areas:

1

Nourish the creative ecosystem:

Create more ways to meet, convene, exchange knowledge, and gain professional skills to make art work more sustainable, profitable, and effective

2

Advocate for arts participation:

Pursue new, innovative ways to leverage the power of art to address contemporary issues in Montana like community vitality, civic engagement, vibrant downtowns, and physical and mental health

egic Plan

3

Promote awareness and appreciation of arts and culture:

Strengthen MAC's role as a central hub of information, resources, tools and tips, and opportunities while increasing awareness of the importance (and usefulness!) of art in society

4

Grow partnerships and expand outreach:

Help identify new funding opportunities, new partnerships, and new avenues to build long-term sustainability for the field.

You let us know that MAC's grants to artists, arts organizations, communities, and schools are indispensable. We'll continue to disseminate as much support throughout the state as possible, and to seek out new sources of funding to benefit Montana communities. Our grant programs are always a balancing act between awarding bigger grants and supporting more activities.

As critical as grant funding is, you also asked for non-financial ways to nourish Montana's arts and culture landscape. We will be providing more robust communications, and will gather and share professional development resources to answer needs at all levels of the creative industries. Across Montana—especially in our eastern counties—there is a hunger to be together in this work, and MAC will strive to foster our statewide creative community in multiple ways.

This is a time to strengthen relationships throughout the arts and culture field, and to build new collaborations with other disciplines. There is now vast data demonstrating that art can be a powerful player in addressing a wide variety of medical concerns like brain injuries, depression and PTSD; can contribute to improving a variety of public health issues; can create community in situations of conflict and disharmony; can boost school attendance; and is an essential component of economic vitality. In the coming years MAC will explore partnerships with other disciplines and sectors to create new opportunities step outside the studio and engage with communities in new ways.

You—community members, arts organizations that represent prodigious public investment, and artists—are the focus of our work. We never forget that all Montanans are our constituents. It is MAC's duty and mission to support, amplify, and celebrate all the ways that you in the arts and culture fields bring light, vitality, strength, and meaning to life in Montana.

Fall on the Yellowstone River.

News from the NEA: Half of all Americans make art

More than half of American adults created and/or performed art of some kind in 2022. That's even more than the 48% of adults who attended an arts event that year. And it's about equal to the 53% who read a book.

A report released this fall from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) tracked arts attendance, participation, and creation in 2022 compared to previous years, based on a survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau. Like many surveys, this one asks more questions than it answers—but its results are still intriguing. For example:

Overall in-person arts attendance dropped below 50% for the first time in 10 years. The biggest losses were in movie attendance (down 15.5 percentage points!), visual arts festivals (16.7 pp), musicals (6.2 pp), and art museums (-6.1 pp). Meanwhile, some 75% of all adults consumed some kind of art via electronic media.

But there were satisfying gains (up 6.2 percentage points since 2017) in adults attending non-classical performances like folk, rock, country, Americana, and comedy shows. Those performances are attracting more people across every age group.

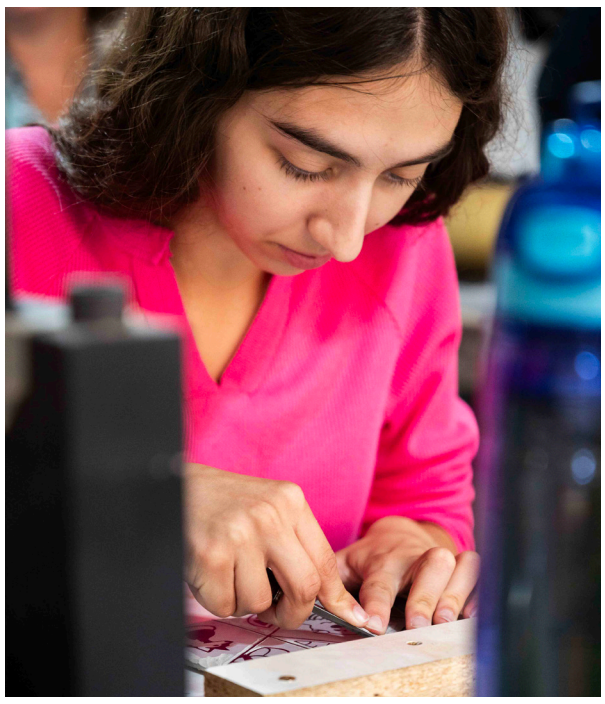
Who's attending? The highest gains were among non-Hispanic white adults aged 35-44 or 45-54, especially among college graduates. The most popular way to hear about an arts event? 17% said social media; 14.7% said from friends and coworkers, and 11.3% said from print or broadcast media. (Every other method measured 8% or lower.)

Coolest factoid: Of those who created/ performed art in 2022, the most popular activity was social dancing.

The overall message from this survey report: With more than half of all adults creating or performing art, we know that art endures as a priority in the lives of everyday Americans. As a people, we want to learn, make, and share art together. Artists and presenters are leaning into the headwind of corporate digital content, which is taking over a greater percentage of audience engagement.

So if we want a vibrant, human-centered ecosystem for art and creativity, we need to work together to sustain it.

Copies of the report, entitled *Arts Participation Patterns in 2022*, are available on the NEA website: www.arts.gov.



Creating art in the Imagine Butte Resource Center's community print studio.

In Memory of...

Kristi Hager's Legacy

By H. Rafael Chacón, Ph.D.

Kristi Hager of Missoula, renowned artist and activist, died on November 12, 2024. Hager was respected statewide as a serious and trailblazing painter, performance artist, photographer, and arts advocate.

By 1981, she had arrived in Montana with degrees in art and architecture and opened a studio in Butte's Metals Bank Building. For 12 years, she never complained about working in the cold and drafty building. She loved her tall ceilings and windows as well as the expansive views of the Berkeley Pit looming over the mile-high city.

Hager began a series of paintings of isolated domestic objects in raking light: a card table, a cake tin, a slinky—austere still lifes with a few eggs or pears on a table that evoked luscious Spanish baroque *memento mori* even as she left them with characteristically dry, unvarnished surfaces. These were symbolic pictures of objects, emblems of the individual's journey in life and sometimes the domestic roles prescribed for women in society.

The Berkeley Pit's magnificent scale, strange colors, and transcendent beauty inspired two great themes across her career, *plein air* or out-of-door painting and environmentalism. Living with the US's largest Superfund site in her viewshed catalyzed a lifetime of defending our precious natural resources. Years later, those pit paintings led to the "Cool Water Hula," a public performance and ritual that brought many friends to advocate for the clean-up of the site. Donning flowered leis and blue sarongs, t-shirts, and head scarves, Hager and her community danced a prayer at the edge of the pit. Skeptics saw the performance as wishful thinking, yet her re-staging it near the Milltown Dam east of Missoula arguably tipped public perception in favor of its removal and clean-up.

By 1994, Hager moved to Missoula. Hawaiian-style hula and storytelling with a point of advocacy had become integral elements of her performances.

For Hager, *plein air* painting and drawing allowed for a continuous exploration of both formal preoccupations with light and color in the landscape and concerns over extraction, environmental degradation, and sustainability.

She embraced the challenge of rendering water and objects in a variety of contexts and places: a backyard bird bath in strong sunlight, empty canoes floating on glimmering lakes, dappled light on the rocks, cascades, and eddies of her beloved Rattlesnake Creek, moody islands on Flathead Lake, and bathing swimmers in dazzling sunshine at Missoula's municipal pool or the Clark Fork River.

The nude figure, particularly the female form, was of equal importance to Hager. She transformed this traditional subject of American and European art into a politically and socially charged critique of contemporary culture. Whether in aesthetic, erotic, or political settings, she saw the woman's body as a battlefield. Her treatment of the nude, female and male, was arguably the most radical and innovative aspect of her career.

Hager's figural studies, based mainly in years of drawing women with Missoula's Pattee Canyon Ladies Salon, were not attempts at accurate representation, but rather sensitive questionings of the human condition and gender relations. Covering them in camouflage introduced a degree

In Memory of, continued...

of threat to the subject. "My paintings of figures with camouflaged skin started as an anti-war statement that expanded to reflect unconscious chronic hyper-vigilance and lowering visibility in response to gender bias, sexual harassment and assault," she wrote.

Photography paralleled painting and performance. Confined mainly to pictures of bridges, nuclear installations, and other government facilities, Hager's black-and-white photographs were intended as archival records destined for the vaults of the Library of Congress. Even as they revealed loyalty to the craft within strict technical parameters, they were also a venue for her concept of the singular object in the landscape as beautiful.

While acknowledging the magnitude of the loss of Kristi Hager to this state's art community, we also recognize how Montana with all its complexities gave her career meaning and purpose.

H. Rafael Chacón, Ph.D., is Bruce and Suzanne Crocker Director of the Montana Museum of Art and Culture and Professor of Art History and Criticism in the School of Visual and Media Arts at the University of Montana.

David Spencer

David Spencer—bibliophile, independent scholar, and philosopher known about Helena as a walking bookmobile—volunteered and worked at Helena's Holter Museum of Art for 35 years. He attended almost every literary, musical and artistic event; read and wrote poetry; studied Jung; traveled widely; shoveled thousands of sidewalks; wore a hat made of neckties; drank mead; invented his own alphabet; and was "a whirling dervish of majestic tangents." David passed away in Helena on November 13th.

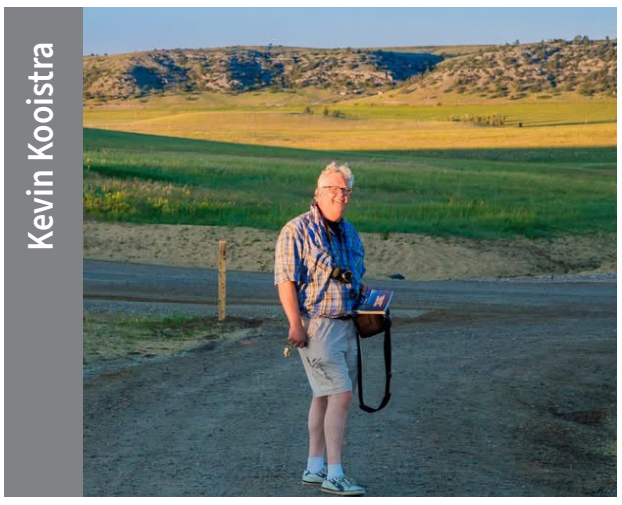


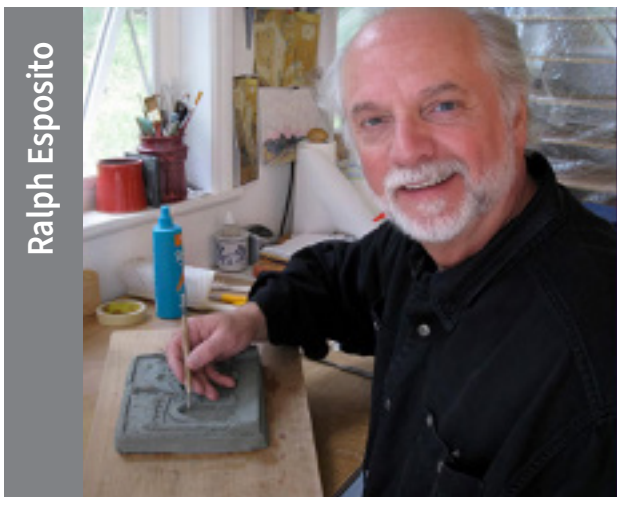
Photo by Rowene Weems

Kevin Kooistra

Kevin Kooistra, beloved community historian and executive director of the Western Heritage Center in Billings, passed away suddenly on December 15, 2024.

Kooistra's death rocked Montana's cultural community, and inspired a flood of comments and stories across the state. The Museums Association of Montana published the following message from Kevin's daughters, Emily and Lilly Kooistra-Manning.

> "Kevin had an unmatched passion for discovering, preserving, and sharing Montana and Billings history. In his almost 30 years of service at the museum, he worked enthusiastically to share the history of this wonderful city with the community in every way possible.
>
> Whether it was through walking tours, public programs, or spending a few hours with a museum guest to find family photos in the archives, he was happy to lend his knowledge however he could. He was especially interested in sharing the forgotten stories of great Montana figures, like women's rights activist Hazel Hunkins, and bringing to light their importance to the state.
>
> For Kevin, the history of the city was such a significant part of his life that he even adopted and named a kitten he found behind the museum Julia Parmly, in honor of the wife of Frederick Billings, the namesake of the town.
>
> Kevin was a great community leader and participated in associations even beyond Billings itself, such as the Extreme History Project of Bozeman, the Southeastern Tourism Board, the Yellowstone Historic Preservation Board, and the Museums Association of Montana. He touched the lives of many and will be dearly missed by all. Kevin's family is deeply grateful for the outpouring of love and support from the people of Billings and across Montana. A celebration of life for Kevin will be announced at a later date."



Professor Emeritus Ralph Esposito

Artist and professor Ralph Esposito of Helena passed away on December 8, 2024. Ralph was a dedicated educator, accomplished artist, and respected member of the Carroll College community who leaves behind a remarkable legacy of over 40 years of service. As a professor of Visual Arts, Ralph inspired countless students with his passion for the fine arts, skillfully blending his professional expertise with an unwavering commitment to education. His advocacy for the arts within Carroll's liberal arts curriculum and his creation of new courses exemplified his dedication to innovation and lifelong learning.

Ralph was a prolific visual artist, known for his work in ceramics, drawing, and painting. His art has been exhibited regionally, nationally, and internationally, including notable shows like "Jingdezhen: The Porcelain City" and "Full Circle," a retrospective of his career. As a champion for the arts, he established the Carroll Art Gallery in 2003, enhancing the college's cultural presence and curating diverse, thought-provoking exhibitions.

Ralph's professional achievements included a Fulbright-Hays grant, numerous awards, and participation in prestigious conferences and residencies. His community involvement was equally impactful, as he frequently donated his artwork to support various causes and non-profits. As a mentor and colleague, Ralph was admired for his generosity, leadership, and unwavering support for the arts and his peers.

Carroll College and the broader arts community were enriched by Ralph's talents, dedication, and spirit. His contributions will continue to inspire and resonate for generations to come.

Announcements...

Missoula Art Museum Announces the Retirement of Longstanding Executive Director, Laura Millin

After 35 years of exceptional leadership, Laura Millin, Executive Director of the Missoula Art Museum (MAM), has announced her retirement, planned for June 2025. Millin's distinguished career has transformed MAM into a vibrant cultural hub, recognized for its dedication to contemporary art and its unwavering commitment to the Missoula community.

Since assuming leadership in 1990, Millin has expanded MAM's collection, established a steadfast commitment to Indigenous artists, and nurtured partnerships with nonprofits across the state. Under her direction, MAM completed a $6 million renovation, transforming the historic Carnegie Library into a vibrant downtown hub for contemporary art. She also significantly increased MAM's endowment, laying a solid foundation for future growth. MAM's wide-ranging educational programming is a hallmark of Millin's tenure and free admission is one of the most powerful expressions of her commitment to make art accessible to all.

"In 1990, I could not have predicted that I would be here today and have succeeded at these endeavors. It is because of the commitment of the board and staff to MAM's mission, artists, and audiences that we have accomplished so much. It is thanks to the vision of our founders fifty years ago and the ongoing support of donors, members, and supporters."

As MAM approaches its 50th anniversary in 2025 the Board of Directors is actively searching for a new Executive Director who will build upon Millin's extraordinary legacy. To ensure a smooth transition, the Board has launched "Laura's Legacy Fund," which will provide the necessary resources to recruit new leadership and maintain the museum's strong foundation.

As the search progresses, MAM remains committed to its mission of engaging the Missoula community through contemporary art. The search committee is focused on identifying a dynamic leader who will guide MAM into its next chapter of growth and transformation. With the steadfast support of its board, dedicated staff, generous donors, and community, the museum will continue thrive as a space for creative expression, connection, and inspiration.

"Laura is a luminous soul—fun, gentle, and always well grounded. She will be dearly missed both personally and professionally. Thankfully, Laura has given MAM a strong foundation and a long ramp to prepare for her departure. The museum has a great volunteer board and a capable, committed staff. I have every confidence that we will come together to affect a smooth transition, preserving Laura's accomplishments and positioning MAM for future success," said MAM board President Matt Gibson.

Exciting Changes at Elk River Arts & Lectures

By Maryanne Vollers, Chair, Elk River Arts & Lectures Trustees

This past September Amy Zanoni, executive director or Elk River Arts & Lextures, announced that she had accepted a prestigious fellowship for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to continue work on the history writing project she started as a doctoral student.

Elk River Arts & Lectures has announced that Laura Prindiville will be the new Executive Director. Laura brings to ERAL nearly twenty-five years of experience in the Southwest Montana nonprofit community developing programs, raising funds, creating awareness, and engaging communities.

She has worked for a wide-range of organizations from health and human services to conservation and education, including the Children's Museum of Bozeman, Hopa Mountain, the Gallatin Valley Land Trust, and many others. But Laura always hoped that her career would take her back to her first true love, the arts. An avid reader and writer, she believes in the power of writing, reading, art, and literature, and the importance of being in conversation.

New Development and Engagement Coordinator at Arts Missoula

Arts Missoula is delighted to welcome Zola Kell as our new Development and Engagement Coordinator. In her position, Zola will be leading Arts Missoula's development and fundraising efforts, as well as supporting the coordination and execution of outreach events.

Having worked as a visual artist, grant writer, and editor for over ten years, Zola has been a small business owner in Missoula for the past two years. She works with the Missoula Makers Collective and is proud to serve on the board of their non-profit, Making Missoula, which awards grants to makers with handmade businesses.

Performing Arts

Music

Singin' in the *Brain*

Multiple bands come together in an impromptu Red Ants Pants bluegrass jam.

By Krys Holmes

Feeling burned out, sluggish, tired, or disconnected from others? An increasing mass of evidence shows that singing in a group helps forge social bonds, strengthens your brain, and might even make you healthier.

Chorale, church choir, barbershop quartet, hootenanny around the campfire – it doesn't matter. Group singing balances hormones, boosts oxytocin, improves cardiovascular health, and makes people—this has been biometrically proven—feel more connected to each other.

Singing is a universal activity, shared by practically every culture worldwide. A 2014 study published in *Frontiers in Neuroscience* suggests singing may even have preceded speech. Over the last few years scientists have begun measuring the physiological effects of singing—both alone and in a group—to determine if the feelings of conviviality and enjoyment that people experience from singing have any biological basis. Research across the US and abroad is revealing some startling results.

Singing together appears to reduce blood pressure, increase endorphins, and promote a feeling of connectedness more than other activities. One series of studies compared blood pressures pain tolerance, and "feelings of closeness" with groups who sang together vs. groups who did other crafts together but did not sing. The singing groups showed lower blood pressures, produced more endorphins, and reported higher feelings of closeness than non-singing groups.

Other research shows that people who sing by themselves show some health improvements (improved breathing, better posture, reduced muscle tension, lower cortisol), but singing in a group brought very powerful improvements to brain activity, pain relief, and production of positive neurochemicals like oxytocin, dopamine, and serotonin. And research published in *Frontiers in Cardiovascular Medicine* in 2022 showed that some vascular biomarkers—like blood pressure and cardiovascular markers—improved when patients were singing,

Singing is accessible, low cost, and readily available. Everyone can do it. Even if you think you can't sing, you're probably just out of practice. Bach, Aretha Franklin, pow wow songs, or a *Wicked* singalong—however you do it, singing in a group is a pretty fun way to improve your health, wellbeing, social life.

Idaho Green, Gems of the High Plains By Eric Heidle

https://idahogreen.bandcamp.com/album/gems-of-the-high-plains

What happens when a band from Huntley Project, Montana, that's named for a neighboring state but lives in New York City, puts together a double album and releases it on vinyl? Lots, as it turns out, when the listener drops the needle on Idaho Green's massive *Gems of the High Plains'* 34 tracks. A genre-hopping tour of the Big Sky and elsewhere loaded with pun-laden song titles and relentless, chaotic fun, *Gems* has a little something for everyone—unless you have delicate eardrums. From the pick-scraping, feedback-laced intro of "I Still Miss You" which kicks off side one, the band dips into and out of punk, rock, hardcore, shoegaze…oh, hell. They play a little of everything, and play it with invention and energy. Guitar-drenched fuzz backs up the breezy delivery of lyrics on "Beer. Wings. Sports," while every second of "Post Dystopian Future Baby's" eight minutes sounds exactly like what you'd imagine from a song with that title. And just when you think the next track couldn't possibly sound more raw—you'd be right; peppered throughout are brief instrumental numbers like "Perris, Texas" and "Unconditional Waivers," tunes made up of folky acoustic strumming that sound, well, lovely.

If none of that can make you point your browser toward Bandcamp to sample this gem of a record of *Gems*, at least do so to catch the 40 seconds of Weezer-adjacent nostalgia that is "Studs Up At the Suds Hut," the best neo-50s crooner that's probably not about broasted chicken and goblets of domestic beer you're ever likely to hear. If you know, you know. And you should know Idaho Green.

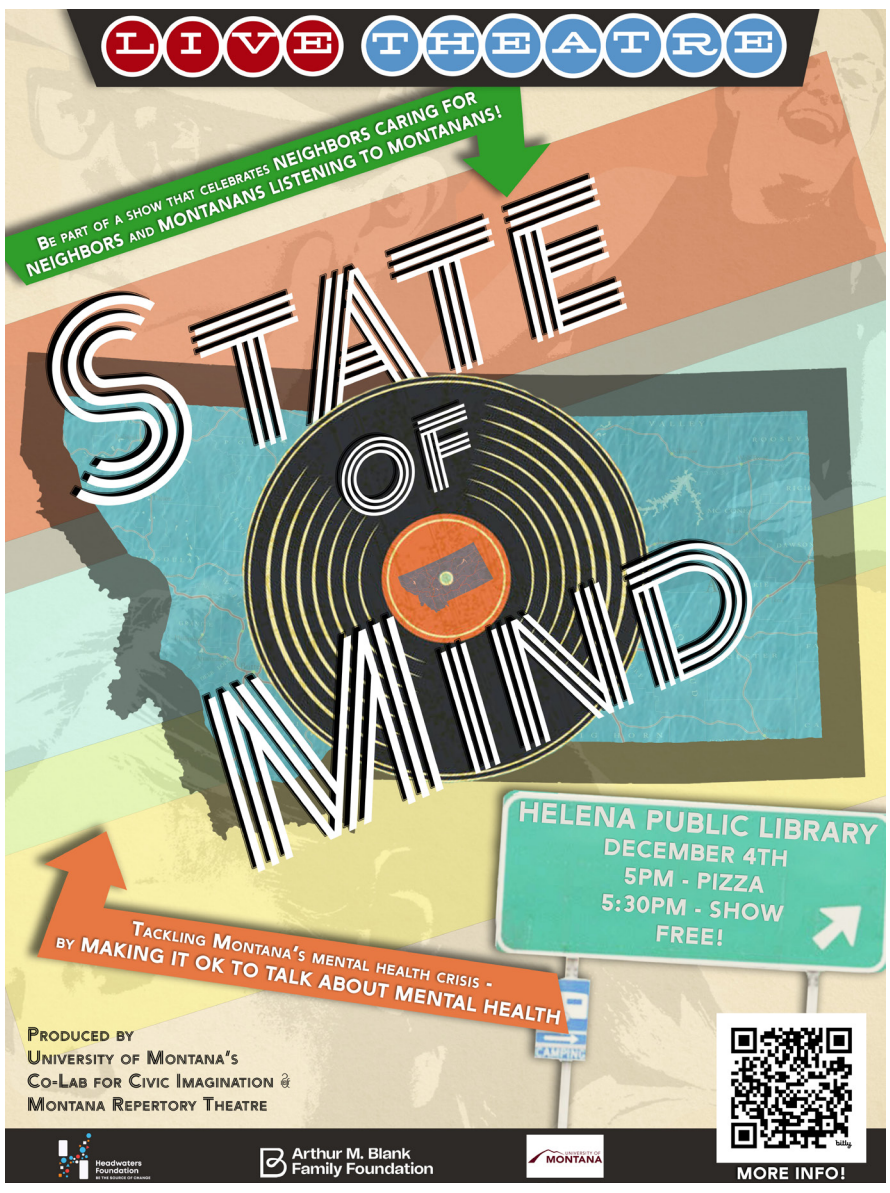
Theater

Just the ***State of Mind*** Montana Needs

"The next 12 months in our Hi-Line area is going to be transformative, I just know it."

That's how Kari Prewett, executive director of the Fort Peck Fine Arts Council, summed up her experience at a recent community meeting in Glasgow that concluded the local residency of *State of Mind*. Kari's sentiment was met with emphatic nods of agreement by others in attendance, including a school counselor, a math teacher, and professionals from the mental and behavioral health sphere in Valley County.

State of Mind is a unique behavioral-health focused theatre and public engagement residency that is touring Montana through May of 2025. Developed in collaboration with the University of Montana's Co-Lab for Civic Imagination and Montana Repertory Theatre, this two-day event consists of a free theatre performance for the general public, a workshop for local students, a workshop for school staff and local health providers/public officials, and a coalition gathering for local behavioral health stakeholders.


LIVE THEATRE
BE PART OF A SHOW THAT CELEBRATES NEIGHBORS CARING FOR NEIGHBORS AND MONTANANS LISTENING TO MONTANANS!
STATE OF MIND
HELENA PUBLIC LIBRARY
DECEMBER 4TH
5PM - PIZZA
5:30PM - SHOW
FREE!
TACKLING MONTANA'S MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS - BY MAKING IT OK TO TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH
PRODUCED BY
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA'S
CO-LAB FOR CIVIC IMAGINATION &
MONTANA REPERTORY THEATRE
Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation
MORE INFO!

State of Mind has been developed over two years by a group of professional Montana artists, facilitators, and mental & behavioral health professionals in response to the troubling trends in Montana's behavioral and mental health outcomes. **35% of adult Montanans report symptoms of anxiety or depression, and Montana ranks in the top five states for highest rates of suicide across all age groups.** With so many Montanans living in rural areas, it can be challenging to connect with professionals like psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists, or addiction counselors in times of crisis or just for regular counseling support.

Kendra Mylnechuk Potter at a presentation of *State of Mind* at the Montana Healthcare Foundation Symposium in Bozeman. *Photo by Bride Side Photo and Video.*

Health providers and policy experts believe that in addition to having more professionals around the state, we also need to change how we talk about mental health with one another.

"If someone has an accident on the ranch or the job site, we know how to get them the medical help they need, but if someone's struggling with addiction or other mental health crisis, sometimes it's less clear how to help. And that's where ***State of Mind*** comes in," says the project's director Michael Rohd.

"The arts are a powerful way to not just share stories, but to gather and imagine the futures we want to see and build together. *State of Mind's* goals include tackling stigmas around seeking help, making local resources more visible and contributing to local capacity for community care."

The project, which is completely free to all communities, kicked off its tour on September 19th in Missoula, and has since visited Conrad, Great Falls, and Glasgow.

***State of Mind* performers Kendra Mylnechuk Potter, left, and Jackie Vetter, right.** *Photo by Andy Kemmis.*

Kendra Mylnechuk Potter, left, Jackie Vetter, center, and Mack Momberg, right, performing at the Missoula Public Library. *Photo by Andy Kemmis.*

"It truly stands out as one of the best conversations I've had with both students and staff," said Raymond DeBruycker, the principal of Conrad High School.

"It was inspiring to see students and teachers engage in authentic conversations on such a tough topic. This workshop not only addressed important issues but also empowered us to support one another in our collective journey toward emotional well-being within our school and our community. I highly recommend it to anyone."

Students from Conrad High School participate in *State of Mind* workshop. *Photo by Michael Rohd.*

In Great Falls, students took what they had written in their workshop—a document stating what they need to feel safe and supported in their school—and presented it to the school board, which brought the room to a standstill.

"We've had several community members from a variety of different businesses ask how they can get involved in the work our students are doing. Pretty great to see the community reaction," shares Marla Hauser, the Youth Leadership and Success Community Coordinator at Great Falls Public Schools.

Word is traveling about the program, and several towns are lining up to bring the project to their community.

"Our goal is to visit as many communities as will have us—hopefully 20-30. And we still have availability in the spring," says Josh Aaseng, the project's producer for community partnerships.

State of Mind's premise that arts are powerful contributors to civic conversation seems to be validated by one Glasgow participant who reflected, "The way we act is learned behavior. Out here in the frontier, we silo off our individual communities. But it can be unlearned."

State of Mind will be touring Montana through May of 2025 at no cost to communities. For more information about *State of Mind* and the people involved, visit: https://www.umcivicimagination.com/state-of-mind-1 or follow them on Facebook @ https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61556751081311

Performing Artists: **Want to Showcase?**

Performing artists of all disciplines can build audience and expand their reach by performing at showcases across Montana, the region, and the continent. Now there's a great new tool, "I Want to Showcase," a clearing house of showcases, deadlines, and application links. Check out their "Partner Conferences" page to see upcoming deadlines, and scout showcases you might want to plan for in the future.

Applications open soon for the **Montana Performing Arts Consortium Conference 2025** (Oct 10-12, Great Falls) and the **Arts Northwest 2025 Conference** (Oct 13-16, Beaverton, OR). And there are plenty more to check out. Go to: www.iwanttoshowcase.ca

Photo courtesy of Montana Performing Arts Consortium website.

The Life of David Dragonfly (1957 – 2024)

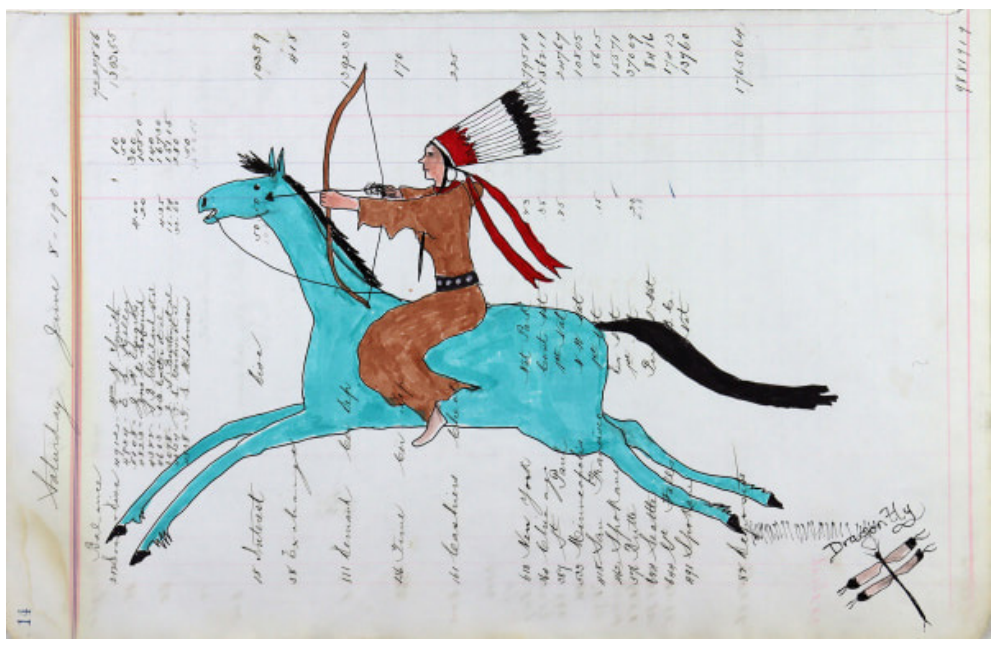
By Lisa Simon, Radius Gallery, Missoula

We are deeply saddened by the loss of esteemed artist, storyteller, and friend, David Dragonfly. His work has been a cornerstone of Radius gallery for over six years, captivating audiences with its unique blend of tradition and innovation. He taught us so much during that time–his expertise, humor and artistry will be dearly missed.

Although well known as a printmaker, David was one of a handful of artists who consciously revived ledger art in the 1970s, recognizing the continuation of the traditional storytelling practice of the Plains Indians onto surplus government ledgers as an act of resilience against what has been recognized as genocide by the US government.

While the field of Contemporary Ledger Art has since developed, David's artwork remained deeply rooted in the traditions of his tribe, bringing to life historic figures (such as Spirit Boy Chief, Shoots First, County Coupe), cultural practices (such as hunting strategies, moving camp, tanning hides), and warrior activities (such as Running Eagle—a female Blackfeet warrior, Bear River Massacre, Stealing Enemy Horses).

The photos above are from earlier this year when he joined us at Radius Gallery in a celebration of his works exhibited from January to April. The exhibit included a massive painted buffalo hide to demonstrate the original Blackfeet tribal practice, before government ledgers were more plentiful than buffalo. The buffalo hide was draped over a custom-built table to allow visitors to better experience the bridge between the traditional practices of painting hides to the framed artwork, on original ledger papers, curated on the gallery walls. During those months, David's work educated hundreds of visitors and created many, many appreciators of this profound and moving artform.



Running Eagle

Singing the Sacred Song

We honor his legacy and the indelible mark he left on the art world.

A SUMMER FESTIVAL
of a Different Sort

Summer's a time for music and cultural festivals, and Montana's home to more than a few: Under the Big Sky, county fairs, powwows, Red Ants Pants, and rodeos are among the gatherings which celebrate the history and culture of Big Sky Country.

But a vibrant new festival planned for August promises to add greatly to that rich lineup of Montana cultural events: IndigiPalooza MT.

A collaboration between Chickadee Community Services, the Missoula Public Library, and Montana Poet Laureate Chris La Tray, IndigiPalooza will be a celebration of Indigenous art and storytelling. The festival will include sessions featuring Indigenous artists, writers, entrepreneurs, art exhibits, a vendor market, and an appearance by Joy Harjo, a three-term US Poet Laureate.

Opera Montana sings original Indigenous compositions in unison.

And August may seem like a long way off, but you can start prepping now and supporting the festival by enrolling in ***Native American Studies for Everyone.*** It's a remaking of Chickadee's Native American Studies for Teachers into a course aimed at everyone. Want to learn more about language revitalization, food sovereignty, MMIW, and western vs. Indigenous ways of knowing? This 10-week course will cover these subjects in depth from an Indigenous viewpoint.

Class schedule:
February 10-April 14, 2025

No required Zooms/synchronous components

Pay what you can afford: $50-$300; Native American Studies for Everyone is a fundraiser for IndigiPalooza MT. Learn more at: www.chickadeecs.org/projects

The Browsing Bison, welded sculpture, The Bookstore, Dillon, Montana

Writing Wednesday

feeding a literary community

Story by Leslie Budewitz

Twice in the last 10 days, I've gotten a visible illustration of the power of storytelling and the hunger for conversations about books in my community. It's been enormously satisfying for many reasons. Let me explain, because I think it might relate to you and your community, too.

I live in Bigfork, a small town in northwestern Montana, a town with a long history of celebrating the visual arts, music, and theater.

At one point, in a town of less than 5,000, we had 13 galleries in the Village, what we call our downtown, although we're now down to half a dozen. Our once-thriving bookstore closed years ago. The "big town," Kalispell, 30 miles away, has a small bookstore focused on used books and new books by local authors or of local interest. Earlier this year, B&N opened a small store in Kalispell. (So small there's no room for a cafe!) Across the valley, 45 miles away in Whitefish, another small bookstore sells new books. None is big enough to hold book talks, although two of the three hold signings. The county library system has three branches; until recently, none had space for book talks.

Despite our size, despite our distance from just about everywhere, the Flathead Valley has a lot of writers. For more than 30 years, the Authors of the Flathead, a multi-genre writers' group based in Kalispell, has held regular weekly classes, speakers, and critique sessions, and a small annual conference, nurturing local talent.

But local authors had few opportunities to share our work with readers.

So we got creative. I've held my book launches in art galleries since 2013, when one owner suggested celebrating my debut mystery, set in a fictional version of our town, as part of an exhibit called "Bigfork in Paint and Print." I sell books in local gift shops and at the summer Festival of the Arts. Friends and I hold an annual event in the outdoor space of a popular bar and bakery the Sunday before Labor Day. You get the idea.

But this year, things changed. **The Friends of the Library held a book fest** in conjunction with its spring festival of library-related activities for kids on the grounds of the Conrad Mansion, a beautiful historic home in Kalispell. Organizer Laura Hill set up three panels – on mystery, historical fiction and nonfiction, and general fiction. I agreed to moderate the mystery panel, and set up the canopy I use at the arts festival on the mansion's lawn. More than sixty people came.

It poured. *It poured.* And they stayed. We hastily moved our book tables to the mansion's veranda, alongside a table of books from the

gift shop and bookstore at the NW Montana History Museum. The museum director, Margaret Davis, came to the same conclusion as the rest of us: **Our community yearned for book talk.** And she started pondering options because, as she told me, "I have a roof."

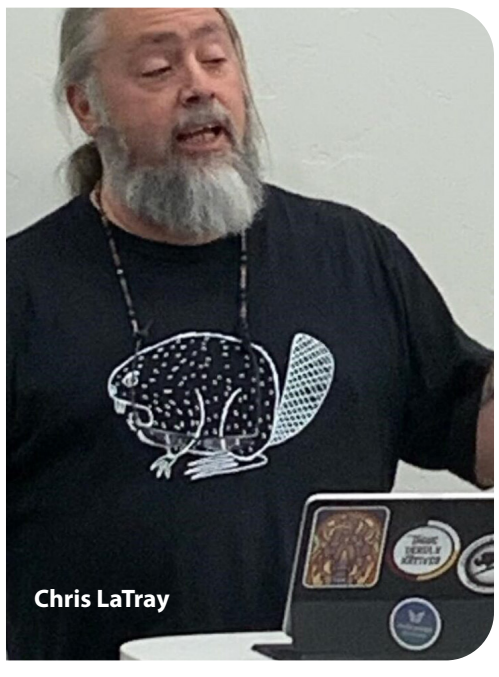
Meanwhile, after years of planning and fundraising, disrupted by the pandemic and a flurry of crossfire between the library board, controlled by the county commissioners, and the library staff and supporters, Bigfork finally got a new library. It opened this past August – nearly 6,000 feet of space set in a woodland grove on the edge of town. We went from a library the size of the first floor of the average house to one the size of a gymnasium.

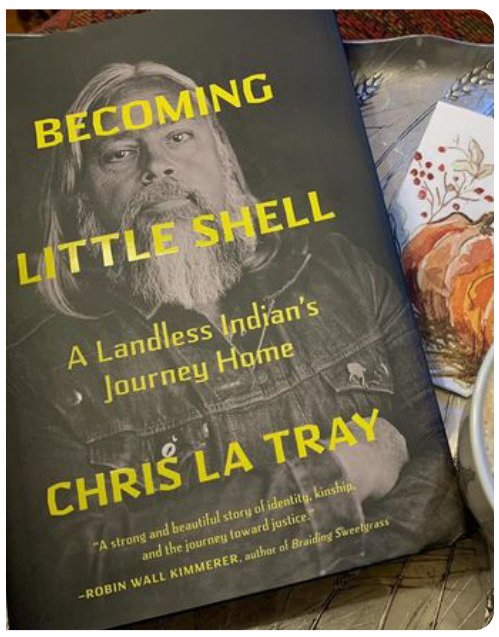
And on a Friday afternoon in early November, 61 people filled the lecture room for the first programming aimed at adult readers. As part of a new series called "Poets in Montana" sponsored by Humanities Montana and its Center for the Book,* our state poet laureate, Chris LaTray, spoke about his new book, *Becoming Little Shell: A Landless Indian's Journey Home* **(Milkweed Press, 2024). A combination memoir and history, Chris's book tells the story of the Little Shell tribe's decades-long fight for federal recognition and his exploration of his identity as a Native American.**

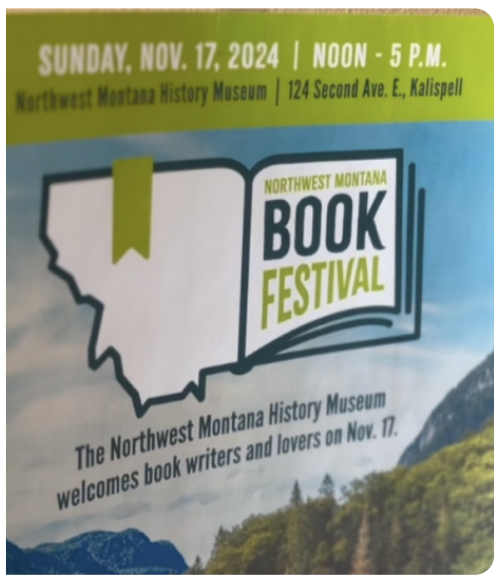
61 people, in a room that held 36. In a town that's still officially very small. To hear a poet. To hear about our state's tribal history and culture.

Then, last Sunday, more than 200 people attended the inaugural book festival at the History Museum. It's fitting that it's housed in the old Central School in Kalispell, built in 1894 – a three story brick building that still has its chalkboards and its charm. And its roof.

More than 25 authors exhibited their books. Five speakers, all of us from western Montana, gave presentations in the big classroom on the top floor. Jonathan Fetter-Verm spoke on "Picturing History," telling nonfiction stories through graphic books. I spoke on "'Stagecoach Mary' Fields: At the Juncture of History and Myth," dovetailing with my new book, *All God's Sparrows and Other Stories: A Stagecoach Mary Fields Collection*. Historians Steward Wilson and Melissa Barker gave a talk called "Gatsby at 100: It's a Story About the West After All," focusing on Fitzgerald's connection to Montana. Our keynote speaker was Debra Magpie Earling, author of the historical novels *Perma Red and The Lost Journals of Sacajawea*, both stunning books that tell important stories of Native Americans in the west. Earling is a retired University of Montana professor and is Bitterroot Salish, and a powerful voice for the power of storytelling.


Chris LaTray


BECOMING
LITTLE SHELL
A Landless Indian's Journey Home
CHRIS LA TRAY
"A strong and beautiful story of identity, kinship, and the journey toward justice."
–ROBIN WALL KIMMERER, author of Braiding Sweetgrass


SUNDAY, NOV. 17, 2024 | NOON - 5 P.M.
Northwest Montana History Museum | 124 Second Ave. E., Kalispell
NORTHWEST MONTANA
BOOK FESTIVAL
The Northwest Montana History Museum welcomes book writers and lovers on Nov. 17.

There is a hunger for serious conversation. For talk about books. For talk about our history. For talk about the people we as a society often overlook. Chris and the Little Shell. Debra and the Salish and the women at the center of her stories. And though I'm white, Mary Fields (ca. 1832 – 1914) was a Black woman born into slavery who spent the last 30 years of her life in Montana. My talk focuses on Mary, the missionary era, and the Black experience in late 19th century Montana. I've lost track of how many people told me they'd had no idea Black people were here back then. (Since York, in fact – Captain Clark's slave, who arrived here with the expedition in 1804.)

Reading, we know, builds empathy. It expands our cultural understanding. I believe that is more important than ever, in our increasingly divided country, in a society where too many people feel free to express hatred and disdain for other people, simply because of a perception related to their identity. (If you don't believe that, you probably aren't on social media. Which is probably wise on your part!)

Besides, to quote my friend, mystery author Mary Jane Maffini, **the world is more interesting when you know more about the people in it.**

If you're a writer, support other writers in your community. Go to their events. Hear what they have to say, even if they don't write what you write and you don't plan to buy a book. I guarantee you'll learn something that applies to your own work – Jonathan's discussion of the gutter in comics aka graphic novels prompted an insight for me about its equivalent in narrative storytelling – and to your own life.

If you're a reader, pick up a book by an author whose cultural identity – whether racial, religious, sexual, or gender – is different from your own, and talk about it. Share it with your book club. Scout out opportunities to hear authors speak, at bookstores, libraries, and historical museums. If there aren't any, create them – the roof is optional.

And the readers will come. I guarantee it. It's not a magic pill. It won't heal all wounds and end divisiveness. But it will help.

That is the power of literary community.

Learn more about Humanities Montana and its programs: humanitiesmontana.org

The Fringe?

It's the Fabric of Society

By Chris La Tray, Montana Poet Laureate

In a network of caves in southwestern France are thousands of paintings arrayed all over the walls, a collection which—people who know such things suggest—took multiple generations to produce. This magnificent artwork is also, to my thinking, poetry. It is a reflection of the world our ancestors were part of, an expression of their relationship to all the living beings they shared their community with … which is exactly what poetry is. It's what all art is!

These artists had no idea that what they depicted would allow people to understand their world a little bit better thousands and thousands of years later. What a gift they've given us simply because they were moved to express themselves! Self-absorbed as we modern humans tend to be as it relates to our own cleverness, we too often fail to remember, and honor, that we are barely different from those long-gone people. We still require the same basic things to survive that they did: food, shelter, companionship. And art. Whatever compelled our ancestors to decide to share their lives through paint on a wall, this decision nonetheless provides a thread that has bound us all across time and culture since. What a celebration.

Recently, a philanthropy committee from a regional financial institution denied a request for funding that a couple friends and I made for an event we are planning next summer, a celebration of Indigenous art and creativity to mark my final hurrah as Montana poet laureate (more to come on that). Their reasoning is that they, "…have a board-approved philanthropy strategy that calls for us to donate 5% of our net income to organizations working for lasting change in the areas of protecting the environment, building inclusive economies, and empowering people. The arts have always been a bit on the fringe of this strategy, and we are working to stay true to our strategy."

Some strategy. These folks will be receiving an open letter. How can I, poet laureate, governor-appointed representative and defender of the arts, of the fringe, let this position stand uncommented on?!

It's not that my intrepid cadre making the request didn't get any cash,it's the failure of many institutions to recognize the bedrock nature of art and the role it plays in every aspect of uniting our communities. It is through the arts that we find the ability to protect, include, and empower. It is in the stories we share that makes us realize we have so much in common, stories told through music and words and yes, paintings on walls. Stories and creativity break down the barriers that would otherwise divide us. We have survived as a species for millennia because of the stories we have handed down across countless generations. Nonprofits and philanthropists and boards of directors and yes, even financial institutions, come and go. Art and artists are eternal.

Never mind that whenever any organization doing this non "fringe" work needs to raise funds, it is artists they appeal to for donations to serve as auction items and the like. Finally, there are numerous artists certainly doing their banking through this institution as a means to keep their money in the flow of this community, for the good of this community. They deserve consideration.

Which is to say this: our ability to create a future together as a community, as community of town, city, state, country, and world, hinges on our ability to connect to our commonalities, which vastly outnumber our differences. Art is essential to this. Art – the creation of it, the sharing of it, the experiencing of it – is the not-secret ingredient to having good lives together and to provide good futures for those counting on us to leave a good world for them to live in. It always has been, and it always will be. We forget at our peril.

Holiday Shopping Poem

Sketched

against a gray sky

Migizi floats above

the Costco parking lot

the final Monday

before Christmas

and I can only dream

what baffled thoughts

occupy her perception

of what we've become.

—Chris La Tray

The Dog Across the Street

– with icy eyeballs

has been barking for

what seems like hours.

What is he announcing

to the world, I wonder,

over and over,

like a self-appointed town crier?

Could it be the

glory of a morning

under heavy clouds,

the sun still abed,

a thin layer of fresh snow

delivered under

cover of darkness

to greet us at daybreak?

Is he urging us all

to emerge from

the warmth of our homes

and join him in praise?

Or maybe he's just

sick of it all,

of the relentless grind,

guarding an empty house.

Could be he's just

telling us all what he thinks,

of the ramshackle neighborhood,

our shiftless approach to living.

—Chris La Tray

Books

Aversion

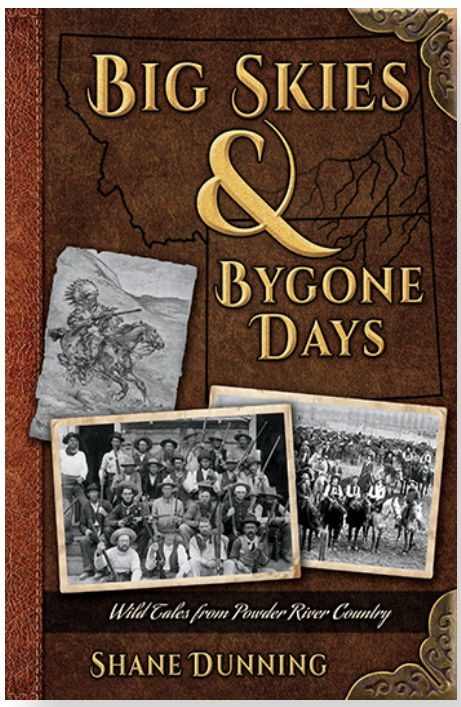
by Larry Stanfel

Blake Reffett and his wife, Claire, never agreed on what had sent him to Briar Falls Hospital. He claimed it was her persistent agitation in favor of the treatment, while, in her view, recognition of his alcoholism finally penetrated the shield he had erected around it.

There he was, however, alone for two weeks in a locked facility where shoelaces and ballpoint pens were prohibited, where his neighbors were addicts of various sorts and psychotics roaming the halls and intruding into his uncomfortable room.

More than the sickening rigors of aversion therapy awaits Blake, though, and his life will be transformed in ways the clinicians never dreamed.

At moments intensely funny, with characters too real to doubt, dark rip currents move below the frothy waves and pull inexorably at the protagonists.



Big Skies & Bygone Days

by Shane Dunning

Journey into the heart of Powder River Country with *Big Skies & Bygone Days: Wild Tales from Powder River Country*, a compilation of award-winning stories from author Shane Dunning. This compelling collection of thirty-five historical vignettes brings to life the untold stories and rich history of northeast Wyoming and southeast Montana.

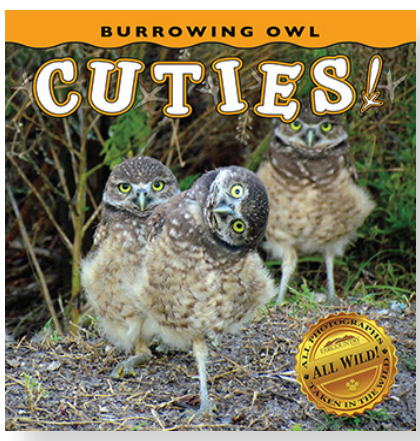
Local author Shane Dunning takes readers on an unforgettable tour through time, uncovering the grit, glory, and harsh realities of life in the American West. From the towering Bighorn Mountains to the rolling Black Hills, Dunning expertly weaves together tales of cattle barons, Native American resilience, homesteader endurance, and lawless frontiers.

Drawing from his extensive work with the Powder River Examiner and in-depth research, Dunning presents history as it was experienced, shedding light on the characters and events that shaped the region's legacy.

Dunning invites readers to discover the history of Powder River Country, where the rivers run north and history never runs dry.

Shane Dunning specializes in the history of northeast Wyoming and southeast Montana. He holds degrees from the University of Wyoming and the University of Oklahoma. After a successful career in healthcare administration, he turned his passion for history into a full-time pursuit, contributing regularly to local publications and historical journals.

Three From Farcountry...

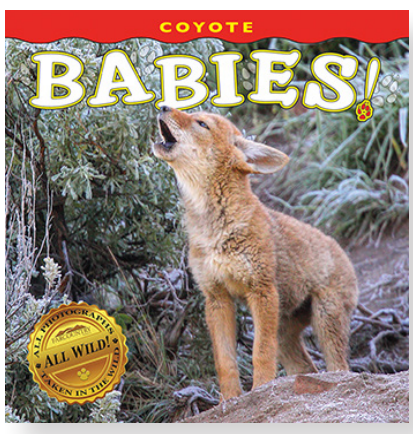


Burrowing Owl Cuties!

Burrowing Owl Cuties! digs into the well-grounded world of burrowing owls, with 13 vivid and delightful photographs and fun rhymes to go with them.

Burrowing Owl Cuties! will spark toddlers' curiosity about the world and the animals around them. Amazing photographs by world-class wildlife photographers showcase burrowing owls in the wild.

Burrowing Owl Cuties! is a perfect read-aloud book for bedtime or for early readers. These sturdy, durable board books will remain children's favorites for years to come.

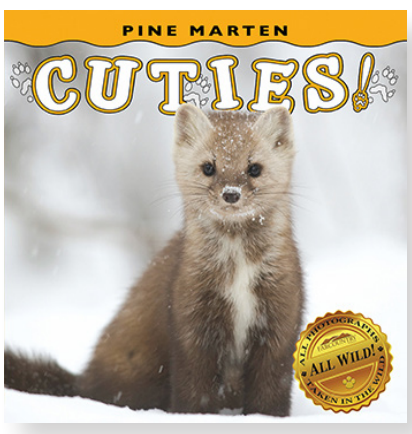


Coyote Babies!

Coyote Babies! is out to charm toddlers with its vivid images of one of North America's most well-known canines. Each page is a heartwarming escapade in the playful world of coyote pups. From wrestling with their siblings to napping with their mother.

This captivating board book includes 13 high quality photographs of baby coyotes taken entirely in the wild.

Coyote Babies! is fantastic as a read aloud book or for practicing reading for young readers. With an easy-to-follow rhyming scheme, the book catches children's attention and gets them curious about the outdoors and the world of coyotes in the wild.



Pine Martin Cuties!

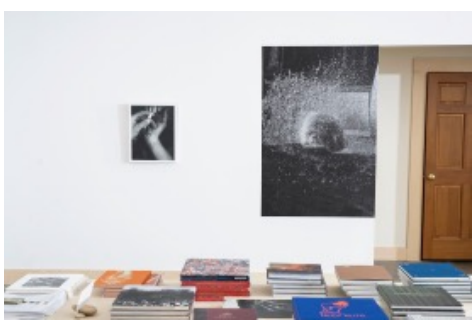
Pine Marten Cuties! jumps into the mischievous world of these furballs with 13 vibrant full-color photographs accompanied by clever rhymes.

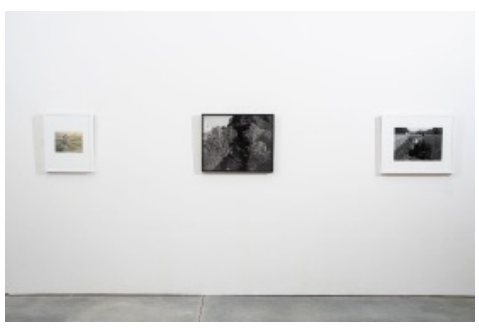
Young readers will be enthralled by the cute antics of this resident of northern forests. *Pine Marten Cuties!* is easy to read aloud, and provides insights into the lives of these elusive animals.

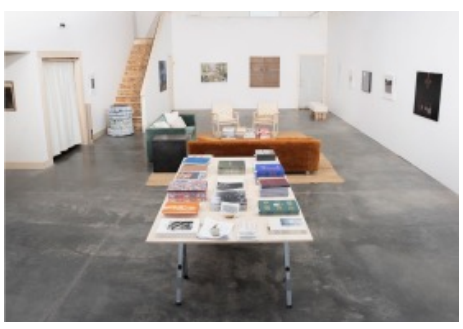
All the photographs in *Pine Marten Cuties!* were taken in the wild by world-class wildlife photographers. Sure to spark interest in the natural world among kids of all ages. This book is perfect for new readers and as a read-aloud book to stimulate early language development and curiosity.

Strata Editions is an experimental photography project and store presenting collections of photobooks, photographic prints, and furniture designed in-house.

Launched by Will Warasila, a post-documentary photographer focusing on long-term projects concerning toxicity, the environment, and slow violence, Stata Editions gives us the opportunity to focus on visual and material work through a thematic lens. The space offers a place to consider the relationships between photography, self, environment, and production. The works shared tell us stories about ourselves, and about how we tell stories.







Southern Spirit

For their second collection, *Southern Spirit*, Strata Edition celebrates the American South, a place of beauty and decay, deliverance and devastation, faith and fossil fuels. These myriad contradictions are on full display in the current collection of contemporary photographs and photobooks. Strata Editions' themed collections release two to three times a year.

Featured Artists

Adrianna Ault
Baldwin Lee
Ben Alper
Colby Deal
Curran Hatleberg
Dawoud Bey
Gregory Halpern
Harlan Bozeman
Harrison Miller
Ian Edward White
Irina Rozovsky
Julie Rae Powers
Kennedi Carter
Kristine Potter
Maria Sturm
Mark Steinmetz
Matthew Genitempo
Matt Eich
Nabil Harb
Phyllis B. Dooney
Rahim Fortune
RaMell Ross
Shane Rocheleau
Will Warasila

Prints

Their second collection, Southern Spirit, shares 13 pieces by notable photographers, printed through a variety of methods. These include the chemical and optical processes of silver gelatin and work prints, as well as digital printing processes such as archival pigment, dye-sublimation, and PhotoTex.

Furniture

Strata Editions is intended as a reading room for anyone who passes through its physical and online doors. The furniture pieces designed in-house are ongoing experiments around a central thought: that starting from a place of safety and comfort can help us sit more deeply with new ideas, broadening our imaginations and capacity for connection.

Photobooks

Alongside the prints, Strata Editions carries a selection of 17 photobooks. These books are the foundation of the project, and represent a range of publications from more affordable to high-end collectibles. The titles have been made available by the publishers or the artists themselves.

Events

An integral part of Strata Editions' ethos is to be connected to community. Strata has held events for the photography world and those in Livingston. Not limited to exhibitions, they have also held conversations with photographers, hosted students including those at the Chico Review, and keep their doors open for public and private viewings as well as special events.

Strata Editions, 18 Business Park Road, Unit 1C, Livingston, MT 59047
For more information please contact: will@strata-editions.com or visit: strata-editions.com

Visual Arts

Montana's Circle of American Masters in the Folk and Traditional Arts
Announces New Additions to the Circle

To celebrate Montana's heritage and showcase the traditional arts, the Montana Arts Council founded the Montana's Circle of American Masters in the Folk and Traditional Arts program. It recognizes Montana folk artists for artistic excellence in their work, along with their help in preserving the state's cultural heritage.

The folk and traditional arts include material culture, such as utilitarian handcrafted and often decorative arts like woven baskets, tapestries, and metal work. They also encompass expressive culture, such as Native and cowboy poetry and storytelling. Whether part of an ethnic, geographic, linguistic, religious, or occupational community, each of these practices reflects the aesthetics and values of the community in which they arise and serves as a powerful symbol of a group's identity.

After the rigorous nomination and paneled induction processes, we're proud to announce four new additions to the Circle: blacksmith Jeffrey Funk of Bigfork, Swedish American weaver Joanne Hall of Clancy, Crow cowboy poet Henry Real Bird of Garryowen, and Salish culture keeper Tim Ryan of Pablo.

Jeffrey Funk

After attending a blacksmithing workshop in 1984—a time when the craft was nearly extinct, **Jeffrey Funk** has since been a driving force in its resurgence, contributing to a generation of blacksmiths now numbering in the thousands. His work spans practical tools, architectural creations like gates and hardware, and public sculptures, including Aeolian harps. Jeffrey founded the New Agrarian School, a nonprofit offering advanced blacksmithing education through workshops, residencies, and courses, while also teaching at institutions such as Penland School of Craft and Peters Valley School of Craft. In addition to founding his school, Jeffrey's achievements include recognition in publications like *Mountain Outlaw*, *Great Falls Tribune*, and Bryce Andrew's *Holding Fire: A Reckoning with the American West*; a feature in the television show *Forged in Fire*; and representing the U.S. in projects such as contributing to an international blacksmithing memorial in Ypres, Belgium.

Joanne Hall

Joanne Hall grew up immersed in the weaving traditions of her Minnesotan Swedish community, later expanding her knowledge by traveling to Sweden. There, she connected with relatives and professional weavers, studied traditional Swedish weaving techniques, and collaborated with key figures in the Scandinavian textile world, including VÄV magazine editors and yarn manufacturers. Joanne's repertoire includes Swedish Art Weaves and other traditional techniques, creating coverlets, tapestries, and decorative pieces that enrich homes and communities. After earning a master's in textile design from the University of Minnesota, she began teaching weaving at the University of Montana in 1971 and has continued sharing her expertise through workshops and private lessons across the U.S. and Canada. Joanne's accomplishments include commissioned tapestries, such as the 20-foot "Texas Wildflowers" for a Dallas hospital, and awards like the Montana Living Treasures recognition in 1996.

Henry Real Bird

Henry Real Bird is a poet whose work blends his Apsáalooke heritage with the identity of an "assimilated Indian," offering a unique perspective on Western North American cattle culture. Raised on the Crow Reservation by his grandparents, he learned Crow as his first language, shaping the rhythm and depth of his poetry. His poetry reflects the traditions of his Crow ancestors, cowboy folklore, and his own experiences navigating Native and Western cultures. A former poet laureate of Montana (2009–2011), Henry co-developed *The Indian Reading Series* for language development on Native reservations and served as president of Little Big Horn College. In 2010, he completed a 415-mile horseback journey, distributing poetry books to rural communities. He has authored numerous anthologies, poetry collections, and children's books, earning accolades such as the Western Heritage Award and Cowboy Poet of the Year. His poem "Thought" is preserved in the Library of Congress' "Living Nations, Living Words" collection.

Tim Ryan

Tim Ryan, an enrolled member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, is dedicated to preserving and sharing the material culture and ecological knowledge of his ancestors. His work focuses on crafting traditional tools like bark baskets, bows, fishing tools, and parfleche, each representing technologies that supported Salish seasonal rounds and lifeways. These tools demonstrate the ingenuity and precision of Indigenous technologies, such as digging sticks used for harvesting bitterroot. As Department Head for Culture and Language at Salish Kootenai College, Tim integrates STEM, Indigenous sciences, ethnobotany, and traditional ecological knowledge into experiential learning aligned with seasonal practices. He also supervises the Mission Mountain Youth Crew, teaching forest restoration and traditional hand tool use, while collaborating with schools, museums, and agencies like Glacier National Park and the Montana Historical Society. Through innumerable camps, demonstrations, and contributions to publications, Tim ensures the continuation of Salish traditional knowledge, connecting future generations to their cultural heritage.

Governor's Arts Awards: *Your Work Matters*

Left: **Montana Arts Council Executive Director Krys Holmes makes introductory remarks at the ceremony.** *Center:* **Lieutenant Governor Kristen Juras delivers remarks in the Old Supreme Court Chamber at the 2024 Governor's Arts Awards ceremony.** *Right:* **The Governor's Arts Awards medals await their new owners before the ceremony.**

By Krys Holmes

Artists sometimes labor in solitude, sing out into audiences talking over them, and—let's face it—gaze baffled at people who ask, "But what do you for a *living*?" So it's nice every once in a while for artists to receive recognition that their cumulative labors are seen as a gift to the greater community.

On December 5, about 130 souls gathered in the Montana Capitol's Old Supreme Court Chamber to honor five prominent Montanans for their lifetime commitment to their art. The ceremony opened with a dedication by Salish artist and Arts Council member Corky Clairmont, and welcoming remarks by Lieutenant Governor Kristen Juras. Then Arts Council Executive Director Krys Holmes introduced beadwork artist Jackie Larson Bread of Great Falls, Belgrade sculptor Jim Dolan, Whitefish musician John Dunnigan, musician John Lowell of Livingston, and Helena's Mary Gayle Shanahan, a painter.

Each of the honorees spoke about their careers and pathways while wearing medals presented to them by the lieutenant governor.

Above: **The 2024 Governor's Arts Award recipients: Mary Gayle Shanahan, John Lowell, John Dunnigan, Jackie Larson Bread, and Jim Dolan.** Left: **Honoree Jim Dolan goes the extra mile to make sure his medal is the genuine article.** *Right:* **John Lowell escorts fellow honoree Mary Gayle Shanahan to the podium to be greeted by Lieutenant Governor Kristen Juras.**

> **"As a very little girl in Blackfoot, Montana, I could never have dreamed that my love for art would lead me here to this moment,"**

said Jackie Larson Bread, whose photorealistic beadwork is both deeply traditional and stunningly contemporary.

Jim Dolan, sculptor of the famed "Bleu Horses" installation along Highway 287 outside Three Forks, said,

> **"None of us are done creating, and we have the people of Montana to thank for that."**

Singer/songwriter John Lowell quoted Pablo Picasso:

> **"Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life."**

When artists create something that hadn't existed before, he said, "that art washes the dust of everyday life away from the soul of the recipients as well, and I can't think of a higher calling."

The Governor's Arts Awards happen every two years, and are among the most enjoyable of tasks for the staff of the Montana Arts Council.

ART *Reduces*
Blood Sugar Levels

We all know art makes for better living. But did you know that making art can significantly lower blood glucose in people with diabetes—and reduce depression along the way?

A 2021 peer-reviewed survey looked at five studies from around the world. Some focused on music therapy; others on painting. Results showed that art therapy of both kinds positively affected blood glucose levels, and also levels of depression, in patients with diabetes. And since depression can affect how consistently patients manage diabetes symptoms, enhancing psychological well-being is critical for diabetics.

A separate study, in 2023, collected 12 years of evidence that attending arts events is associated with a lower risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, independent of socioeconomic factors.

Excited about emerging data like this, the Montana Arts Council is teaming up with the Determinants of Health Program at Montana's Dept. of Health and Human Services. We're laying out ways Montana's robust arts community can collaborate in healthcare spaces to improve public health outcomes in diabetes and cardiovascular health.

We know art is essential to life. We are just learning how art can be a useful tool in healthcare. I'm excited about this partnership. Stay tuned.

– Krys Holmes

Hidden Treasure in Montana

DG House

Story and photos by Jeffrey Conger

DG House is a creative powerhouse. Always optimistic in the moment and working on the next project. She embraces the opportunity to make artwork every day. Devoting her time to original canvas paintings, hand-pulled prints, and popular reproductions, with a firm conviction that art is for everyone, while successfully bridging the gap between contemporary Western and Native American art.

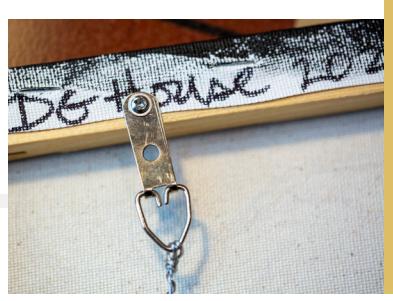
Growing up in the mid-west near Cincinnati, Ohio, and an enrolled member of the Cherokee Tribe of Northeast Alabama, she was first inspired by the Rocky Mountains in her 20s when a poster advertising "Spend the Summer in Yellowstone," prompted her and friends to apply for jobs in the national park. This is when she fell for the magic of the West and, more specifically, Montana. Leveraging her early career in the creative industries as a photojournalist, DG moved to Bozeman in the late 80s and invested in her talents and, with the support of others, rented a tiny studio at the then newly renovated Emerson Culture Center, where she started working and selling her artwork.

Now known for her iconic "Blue" bears that are on display in prestigious museum exhibitions across Montana at the same time at local art fairs around the region. DG confides that she enjoys using all the animals found in the Yellowstone ecosystem as inspiration for her artworks. Popular are her paintings of prong-horned antelope, moose, white pelicans, trumpeter swans, bald eagles, great horned owls, rainbow trout and more.

This winter, DG is proud to be a featured artist at the seasonal opening of the Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel in Yellowstone National Park. Where she often serves as the artist in residence for Yellowstone National Park and the Grand Teton National Park. Today, you can find her work at the LeeAnn Ramey Art Gallery in the Emerson Center for Arts & Culture in downtown Bozeman and keep an eye out for her MAGA sponsored solo exhibition titled "In the Still Moment" as it continues to move around the Treasure State, opening next at the MonDak Heritage Center in Sidney, Montana starting in October 2025.

In addition, one can easily find her artwork online at www.dghouseart.com or contact her directly at dg_house@hotmail.com if interested in a commissioned piece.

DG House bridges the gap between contemporary Western and Native American art with her iconic imagery inspired by animals living in the Greater Yellowstone eco system. One of her longtime favorite subjects is the iconic Grizzly 399, which she has painted countless times over the past decade.



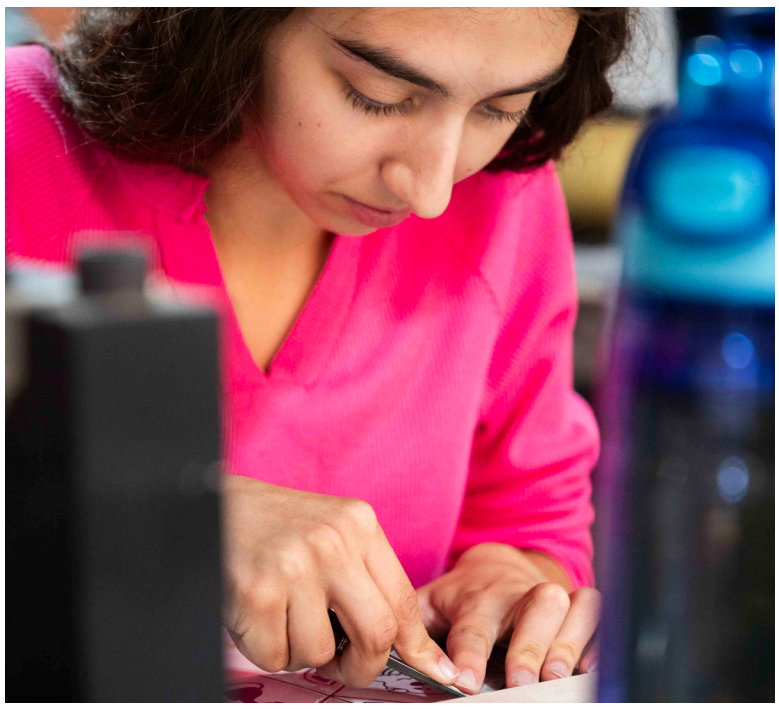
Arts Learning

Creating Access to Arts Learning

through Artists in Schools and Communities Grants

Whether supporting an after school creative writing program for teens, a touring school-day performance of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, or a museum-based workshop series designed expressly for older adults, Artists in Schools and Communities (AISC) grant projects make a big impact on the lives of Montana learners of every age and ability. With a relatively small investment of state and federal funds, and the partnership of our grantees accomplishing work in towns large and small across the state, these grant-funded projects are providing much-deserved access to arts learning in the places and spaces that need it most.

Over the past year, AISC grants have helped provide 70 such projects across the state. The most recently awarded projects, reviewed by the council's Arts Education Committee in late September appear below. Awards to applications submitted to the mid-December deadline will be determined by the committee in late January.



Creating art in the Imagine Butte Resource Center's community print studio.

2024 AISC Experiences | August Grants Awarded

Organization Name	Organization	Project Name	Awarded
Art Mobile of Montana	Dillon	Art Mobile of Montana Travel Money	$2,500.00
Bigger Sky Kids, Inc.	Wolf Point	Teaching Digital Graphic Arts and Painting with Acrylics	$2,500.00
Billings Symphony Society	Billings	Musical Storytime with the Billings Symphony	$2,500.00
East Side School	Livingston	Expanded Art Exploration to Understand the Past	$2,499.00
Free Verse	Missoula	Free Verse Project	$2,500.00
Great Falls Public Schools Music and Art	Great Falls	Paris Gibson Square 3rd Grade Tour	$2,500.00
Hockaday Museum of Art	Kalispell	Traveling Medicine Show	$2,500.00
Instrument Shop*	Missoula	Teens Build a Pipe Organ	$2,200.00
Lincoln Council for the Arts*	Lincoln	Supaman - School and Community Performances	$2,500.00
Missoula Community Radio	Missoula	FreeSessions	$2,500.00
Montana Chamber Music*	Bozeman	Noon Notes Program Expansion	$2,500.00
Opera Montana	Bozeman	Wheels of Harmony 2025 Tour	$2,500.00
Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art	Great Falls	Be your Own Curator	$2,430.00
Queen City Ballet Company	Helena	Queen City Ballet Company's School Outreach Performance of The Nutcracker	$2,500.00
Missoula County Public Schools	Missoula	Virginia Vinal Women's Band Festival	$2,500.00
**new to AISC*		**Total Requests**	**$37,129.00**

Two kinds of arts education grants:

The Montana Arts Council awards two kinds of arts education grants, called Artists in Schools and Communities, or AISC. Each has different deadlines and requirements.

The **AISC Residencies** grant is one cycle per year, and awards up to $10,000 with a required 1:1 match from the applicant. Residencies grants support in-depth, hands-on learning projects.

AISC Experiences grants are smaller—up to $2500—and require no match. Experiences grants support a broader range of learning needs including tools, supplies or equipment, support for transportation to connect learners with arts assets, and projects involving guest or teaching artists that may or may not include hands-on learning. Applications for Experiences grants are due in April, August, and December.

Monica Grable, MAC Arts Education Director, encourages applicants to discuss their intended project before submitting an application. Reach Monica at: (406) 444-6522 or Monica.Grable@mt.gov.

UPCOMING 2025 DATES:

January 10	New FY26 guidelines published to the Artists in Schools and Communities web page: art.mt.gov/aisc FY26 AISC Experiences and FY26 AISC Residencies grant applications open in MAC's online application portal
January 23	1:00 PM webinar on Artists in Schools and Communities grant opportunities
March 17	AISC Residencies applications DUE at 11:59 PM
April 17	AISC Experiences applications (first of three deadlines) DUE at 11:59 PM
July 1	First date of funding disbursement for awarded AISC Experiences (round1) and AISC Residencies projects

Celebrating 20 Years of Poetry Out Loud

Now, maybe more than ever before, youth voices need to be heard. Montana teens hone their public speaking skills, and discover their unique voices, through nuanced and artful poetry recitations.

For twenty years, Poetry Out Loud—a partnership between the National Endowment for the Arts, the Poetry Foundation, and each state's arts agency—has offered high school students the chance to shine onstage using only their speaking voices. Regional events in February advance students to the Poetry Out Loud State Finals in March where one champion will be chosen to compete in the National Finals in Washington D.C. this coming May.

Students select poems from a Poetry Out Loud anthology of 1200 poems, and follow certain requirements to compete. "The Snow-Storm," by Ralph Waldo Emerson (below) is one example from the 2025 anthology.

UPCOMING POETRY OUT LOUD REGIONAL EVENTS

February 5	University of Montana, Missoula	1 PM
February 6	Kalispell – location TBD	1 PM
February 10	University of Providence, Great Falls	1 PM
February 11	University of Montana Billings	1 PM
February 12	Montana State University, Bozeman	1:30 PM

MONTANA POETRY OUT LOUD STATE FINALS

March 8, 2025 at Grandstreet Theatre in Helena

10:00 AM-12:30 PM	Semi-final rounds featuring two recitations each by up to 18 State Finalists
1:30 PM	Recitations by guest poets and judges
	Finals round featuring recitations by 7-8 top finishers from rounds 1 & 2

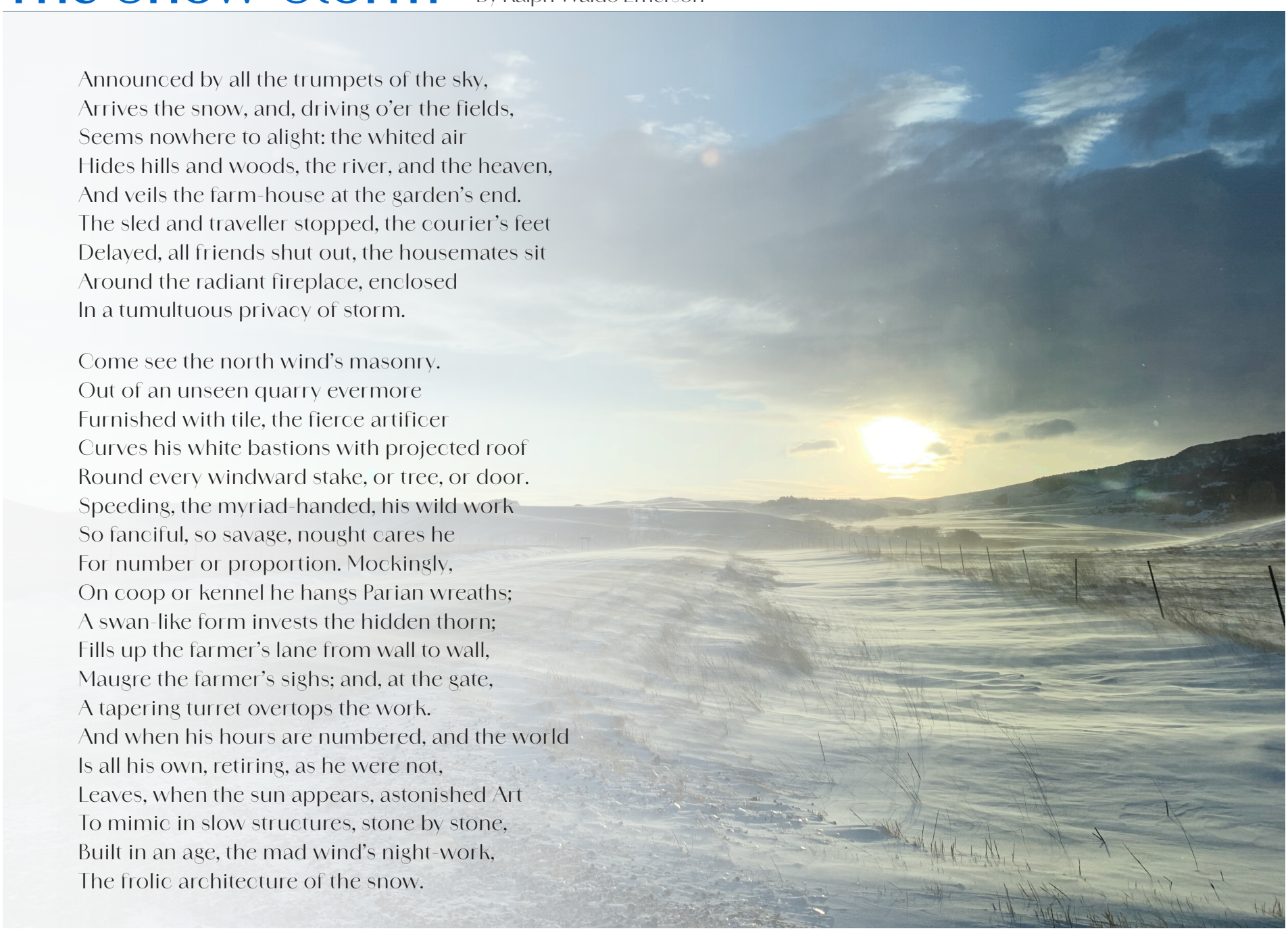
The Montana Poetry Out Loud State Finals, as well as all five regional events, are open to the public. To learn more or become involved, visit art.mt.gov/pol or reach out to Arts Education Director Monica Grable at Monica.Grable@mt.gov or (406) 444-6522.

The Snow-Storm

By Ralph Waldo Emerson

Announced by all the trumpets of the sky,
Arrives the snow, and, driving o'er the fields,
Seems nowhere to alight: the whited air
Hides hills and woods, the river, and the heaven,
And veils the farm-house at the garden's end.
The sled and traveller stopped, the courier's feet
Delayed, all friends shut out, the housemates sit
Around the radiant fireplace, enclosed
In a tumultuous privacy of storm.

Come see the north wind's masonry.
Out of an unseen quarry evermore
Furnished with tile, the fierce artificer
Curves his white bastions with projected roof
Round every windward stake, or tree, or door.
Speeding, the myriad-handed, his wild work
So fanciful, so savage, nought cares he
For number or proportion. Mockingly,
On coop or kennel he hangs Parian wreaths;
A swan-like form invests the hidden thorn;
Fills up the farmer's lane from wall to wall,
Maugre the farmer's sighs; and, at the gate,
A tapering turret overtops the work.
And when his hours are numbered, and the world
Is all his own, retiring, as he were not,
Leaves, when the sun appears, astonished Art
To mimic in slow structures, stone by stone,
Built in an age, the mad wind's night-work,
The frolic architecture of the snow.



Winter Morning. *Photo by Tracy Sullivan.*

Winter Calendar 2025

Big Sky

Warren Miller Performing Arts Center	♫	Mariachi Herencia		January 25	7:30 PM	warrenmillerpac.org/event/	$25+
	🎭	The Aluminum Show		January 31	7:30 PM		$25+
	!	Batsu!		February 8	7:30 PM		$25+
	♫	International Guitar Night		February 19	7:30 PM		$25+
	!	Magic & Puzzles with David Kwong The Enigmatist		March 1 & 2	7:30 PM		$25+
	🎭	James Sewell Ballet		March 8	7:30 PM		$25+
	♫	Anderson & Roe		March 15	7:30 PM		$25+
	♫ & 🎭	Step Afrika!		March 22	7:30 PM		$25+
Montage Grand Ballroom	🖼	Auction for the Arts		February 22	5:00 PM	bigskyarts.org/pages/auction	$200

Big Timber

Big Timber Lutheran Church	♫	Vivaldi's Four Seasons	Big Timber	January 24	7:00 PM	https://baroquemusicmontana.org/full-cal/	$20

Billings

Alberta Bair Theater	♫	Billings Symphony Presents Rhapsody & Romance	Billings	January 25	7:30 PM	albertabairtheater.org/shows/	$20+
	♫	Billings Symphony Family Free Concert	Billings	January 25	12:00 PM		Free
	♫ & 🎭	STOMP	Billings	January 28 & 29	7:30 PM		$42.50+
	♫	"I AM, HE SAID" Celebrating Neil Diamond	Billings	February 1	7:30 PM		$35+
	♫	Damn Tall Buildings	Billings	February 7	7:30 PM		$20+
	♫	DTB Bluegrass Band	Billings	February 7	12:30 PM		$7+
	♫ & 🎭	Billings Symphony Presents The Long Walk Home	Billings	February 15	7:30 PM		$20+
	♫	International Guitar Night	Billings	February 18	7:30 PM		$28+
	♫	The Black Jacket Symphony Presents Led Zeppelin's IV	Billings	February 23	6:30 PM		$22+
	!	Doktor Kaboom	Billings	February 25	9:30 AM & 12:30 PM		$7+
	♫	Trailblazing Women of Country	Billings	February 28	7:30 PM		$28+
	♫	The Ultimate Queen Celebration	Billings	March 8	7:30 PM		$35+
	♫	R.E.S.P.E.C.T.	Billings	March 11	7:30 PM		$51+
	♫	Billings Symphony Presents Lore & Legends	Billings	March 15	7:30 PM		$20+
	🎭	Step Afrika!	Billings	March 20 & 21	9:30 AM & 12:30 PM		$7+
The Pub Station Taproom	♫	Phutureprimitive with special guest Mindex	Billings	January 10	8:00 PM	thepubstation.com/event/	$20
	♫	Love Your Locals: From Nothing, Bloodless, Rainbow Eater	Billings	January 11	8:00 PM		$5
	♫	Latin Night	Billings	January 17	8:00 PM		$20
	♫	Love Your Locals: Not Your Boyfriend's Band, Quiet Coyote	Billings	January 18	8:00 PM		$5
	♫	Love Your Locals: Maul, Niat, Pursuit	Billings	January 25	8:00 PM		$5
	♫	Hell's Belles	Billings	February 1	8:00 PM		$25
	♫	Clu 90's Presents 2000's Night	Billings	February 7	9:00 PM		$15+
	♫	Skiitour	Billings	February 20	9:00 PM		$20
	♫	The Dead Tongues	Billings	February 24	8:00 PM		$12
	♫	Red Not Chili Peppers	Billings	March 7	9:00 PM		$20+
	♫	Steel Panther - Feel the Steel 15th Anniversary Tour	Billings	March 8	8:00 PM		$89+
	♫	The Amity Affliction	Billings	March 19	7:30 PM		$29.50+
Yellowstone Art Museum	🖼	Performance by John Henry Haseltine	Billings	January 16	5:30 PM	artmuseum.org/calendar/	Free
	🖼	John Henry Haseltine: The Mountain Clown	Billings	Oct 25-Feb 9	Daily		Free
	🖼	Man & Machine	Billings	Jun 28-Jul 20, 2025	Daily		Free
	🖼	Will James: The Eternal Cowboy	Billings	Nov 15-Nov 16, 2025	Daily		Free
	🖼	Yellowstone Art Auction 57	Billings	Feb 7-Mar 8	Daily		Free
NOVA Center for the Performing Arts	📖	Readers Theatre	Billings	Jan 5, Feb 2, Mar 2	5:30 PM	novabillings.org/event/	Free
	🎭	Over the River and Through the Woods	Billings	Jan 17-26	7:30 PM & 2:00 PM		$12+
NOVA Center for the Performing Arts	🎭	Enchanted Bookshop	Billings	Jan 31-Feb 9	7:30 PM & 2:00 PM		$12+

	Theatre	Hansel & Gretel	Billings	Mar 14-23	7:30 PM & 2:00 PM		$12+
The Billings Depot	Music	Billings Symphony Winds: Serenade	Billings	February 20	7:00 PM	billingssymphony.org/shows/	$25+
Crooked Line Studio	Art	Open Art	Billings	January 10, 13, 17, 20, 24, 27,31	11:00 AM & 6:00 PM	crookedlinestudio.com/event-calendar	$8
	Art	Painting 101 with Carolyn Thayer	Billings	January 13, 20 & 27	6:00 PM		$225
	Art	Mixed Media Meet Up	Billings	January 15, 22 & 29	6:00 PM		$10
	Art	Polar Sky with Brittney Hernandez	Billings	January 25	10:00 AM & 1:00 PM		$38
	Art	Painting 102 with Carolyn Thayer	Billings	January 16, 23 & 30	6:00 PM		$225
	Art	Friday Painters with Carolyn Thayer	Billings	January 10, 24 & 31	1:00 PM		$225
	Art	Bob Ross Style "Cabin in the Woods" with Ray Dicken	Billings	January 11 & 22	6:00 PM		$65
	Art	Elk in Moonlight with Ray Dicken	Billings	January 18	2:00 PM		$55
	Art	After School Art for Kids	Billings	January 22 & 29	2:30 PM		$180
	Art	Open Art	Billings	February, 8, 10, 14, 15, 17, 21, 24 & 28	11:00 AM & 6:00 PM		$8
	Art	Painting 101 with Carolyn Thayer	Billings	February 3, 10, 17 & 24	6:00 PM		$225
	Art	After School Art for Kids	Billings	February 5, 12, 19 & 26	2:30 PM		$180
	Art	Mixed Media Meet Up	Billings	February 5, 12, 19 & 26	6:00 PM	crookedlinestudio.com/event-calendar	$10
	Art	Painting 102 with Carolyn Thayer	Billings	February 6, 13, 20 & 27	6:00 PM		$225
	Art	Friday Painters with Carolyn Thayer	Billings	February 7, 14, 21 & 28	1:00 PM		$225
Bozeman							
Old Main Gallery & Framing	Music	Beyond Baroque-Fabulous Fanny	Bozeman	January 10	7:30 PM	baroquemusicmontana.org/concert-series/	$5+
Hope Luthern Church	Music	Vivaldi's Four Seasons	Bozeman	January 26	4:00 PM		$5+
Holy Rosary Catholic Church	Music	Handel's Messiah	Bozeman	January 28	7:30 PM		$5+
Hope Luthern Church	Music	Handel's Messiah	Bozeman	January 29	7:30 PM		$5+
Bozeman Public Library	Music	Jazz in the Library	Bozeman	January 11, 18 & 25	2:00 PM	bozemanlibrary.org/events/calendar-of-events	Free
	Art	Crafternoons	Bozeman	January 5 & 12	1:00 PM		Free
	Literary	Baby Storytime	Bozeman	Every Tuesday & Thursday	10:15 AM		Free
	Art	Tween Art Studio	Bozeman	Jan 14, 21, 28, Feb 4, 11, 18 & 25	3:45 PM		Free
	Literary	Nonfiction Writing Group	Bozeman	Jan 14, 21, 28, Feb 4, 11, 18 & 25	5:30 PM		Free
	Literary	Toddler & Preschool Storytime	Bozeman	Every Wednesday & Friday	10:15 AM		Free
	Literary	Cookbooks & Coffee	Bozeman	Jan 15, 22, 29, Feb 5, 12 & 19	10:30 AM		Free
	Art	Fibre Arts	Bozeman	Jan 15, 22, 29, Feb 5, 12, 19 & 26	4:00 PM		Free
	Literary	Library Book Club	Bozeman	January 15 & February 19	3:00 PM & 6:15 PM		Free
	Music	Symphony Storytime	Bozeman	Jan 15, Feb 19 & Mar 19	10:15 AM	bozemansymphony.org/event-calendar	Free
	Music	Singing Souls Senior Sing-Along	Bozeman	January 15 & February 19	3:30 PM	bozemanlibrary.org/events/calendar-of-events	Free
	Art	Lego Club	Bozeman	Every Thursday	3:30 PM		Free
	Music	Noon Notes Chamber Music	Bozeman	February 3	12:00 PM		Free
	Film	Documentary Film Night - Total Trust	Bozeman	February 3	6:00 PM		Free
	Art	Western Montana's Restricted Districts 1970-1940	Bozeman	February 13	6:30 PM		Free
Bozeman Art Museum	Art	Bozeman Collects 2025	Bozeman	Jan 3-Mar 5	Daily	bozemanartmuseum.org/exhibits/upcoming-exhibits/	Free
	Art	Robert Osborn Exhibit	Bozeman	Mar 28-Apr 26	Daily		Free
Willson Auditorium	Music	Bozeman Symphony - Classical Series	Bozeman	January 18-19	7:30 PM & 2:30 PM	bozemansymphony.org/	$27+
	Music	Bozeman Symphony - Kishi Bashi	Bozeman	February 14-16	7:30 PM & 2:30 PM		$28+
	Music	Free Family Concert	Bozeman	February 22	10:30 AM & 1:00 PM		Free
Gallatin Regional Park	Art	Menagerie of the Imaginary Lantern Parade	Bozeman	February 22	6:00 PM		Free
Willson Auditorium	Music	Bozeman Symphony - Beethoven's Violin Conceto	Bozeman	March 22 & 23	7:30 PM & 2:30 PM		$27+
The Emerson	Misc.	Dam It: Partnering with Beavers to heal the planet	Bozeman	January 16	6:00 PM	theemerson.org/event/	Free
Museum of the Rockies	Cultural	SUE the Trex Experience	Bozeman	Feb 7-Sept 7	Daily	museumoftherockies.org/exhibitions/	$10.50+
The Ellen Theatre	Film	Mollie's Pack	Bozeman	January 8	7:00 PM	theellen.my.salesforce-sites.com/ticket#/	$11.50+

Bozeman *(continued)*	🎭	Sweeney Todd	Bozeman	Jan 30-Feb 9	3:00 PM & 7:00 PM		$28+
	🎵	International Guitar Night	Bozeman	February 17	7:30 PM		$44.50
	🎵	California Guitar Trio	Bozeman	March 19	7:30 PM		$38.50
Rockin' TJ Ranch	🎵	Valentines at the Ranch	Bozeman	February 14	6:30 PM	rockingtjranch.com/events/	TBD
The Elm	🎵	Atmosphere	Bozeman	January 11	8:00 PM	logjampresents.com/event/	$38+
	🎵	Kitchen Dwellers	Bozeman	January 16	8:00 PM		$35+
	🎵	Kitchen Dwellers	Bozeman	January 17	8:00 PM		$35+
	🎵	Hell's Bells	Bozeman	January 30	8:00 PM		$25+
	❗	EMO Night	Bozeman	January 31	8:00 PM		$18+
	🎵	Zoso A tribute to Led Zeppelin	Bozeman	February 7	8:00 PM		$30+
	🎵	Railroad Earth	Bozeman	February 28	8:00 PM		$30+
	🎵	Pokey Lafarge	Bozeman	March	8:00 PM		$31+
	🎵	Red Not Chili Peppers	Bozeman	March 8	8:00 PM		$28+
	🎵	Umphrey's McGee	Bozeman	March 12	8:00 PM		$39.50+
	🎵	Big Richard	Bozeman	March 15	8:00 PM		$25+
	🎵	Saint Motel	Bozeman	March 26	8:00 PM		$27.50+
	❗	David Nihill	Bozeman	March 30	7:00 PM		$29+
The Rialto	🎵	Alan Sparhawk	Bozeman	January 15	8:00 PM		$25+
	🎵	Shwayze	Bozeman	January 21	8:00 PM	ticketsonsale.com/concerts/	$22+
	🎵	Blind Pilot	Bozeman	February 18	8:00 PM		$30+
	🎵	Skiitour	Bozeman	February 22	8:00 PM		$27+
Live from the Divide	🎵	Larry & Joe	Bozeman	February 12	8:00 PM	livefromthedivide.com/events/	$50+
Butte							
The Mother Lode Theatre	🎭	A Rare Grand Alignment	Butte	January 10	7:00 PM	buttearts.org/event/	$20
	❗	An Evening with Kevin Nealon	Butte	January 15	7:00 PM		$40
	🎵 & 🎞	Northwest 360 Winter Fest	Butte	January 9-16	Various		TBA
	🎞	Napoleon Dynamite 20th Anniversary	Butte	January 16	7:30 PM		$45
	🎵	Matt Vee and the Killer Vees	Butte	January 31	7:00 PM		$18+
	🎵	The Butte Symphony Series: The Flow of Music	Butte	February 22	7:30 PM		$18.75+
	🎵	Trailblazing Women of Country	Butte	February 27	7:00 PM		$18+
	🎵	Letters from Home	Butte	March 3	7:00 PM	buttearts.org/event/	$25+
	🎭	Dragons and Mythical Beasts - Live!	Butte	March 20	7:00 PM		$18.75+
	💃	Step Afrika!	Butte	March 23	7:00 PM		$18+
Columbus							
Community Congregational Church	🎵	Beyond Baroque-Fabulous Fanny	Columbus	January 11	2:30 PM	baroquemusicmontana.org/concert-series/	Donation
Eureka							
Eureka High School Auditorium	🎵	The Wardens Concert	Eureka	January 25	7:00 PM	sunburstarts.org/	Free
	🎵 & 🎭	The Trail to Oregon - The Musical	Eureka	Jan 31 & Feb 1	7:00 PM & 3:00 PM		Free
	🎵	Mari Black Trio Concert	Eureka	March 23	7:00 PM		Free
Great Falls							
Mansfield Theater	🎞	Hitchcock Film Fest - Vertigo	Great Falls	January 10	6:00 PM	greatfallsmt.net/mansfieldcenter/	$10
	🎞	Hitchcock Film Fest - North by Northwest	Great Falls	January 17	6:00 PM		$10
	🎞	Hitchcock Film Fest - Psycho	Great Falls	January 24	6:00 PM		$10
	🎞	Hitchcock Film Fest - The Birds	Great Falls	January 31	6:00 PM		$10
	🎵	A Night of Patsy Cline with Juliette Angelo	Great Falls	January 11	8:00 PM		$27+
	🎵	String Showdown	Great Falls	February 4	7:30 PM		$15+
	🎭	The Book of Mormon	Great Falls	February 11	7:30 PM		$64.50+
	🎵	Mood Indigo	Great Falls	February 15	7:30 PM		$45+

	Theatre	Chicago: The Musical	Great Falls	February 25	7:30 PM		$64.50+
Mansfield Theater	Music	Letters from Home	Great Falls	March 4	7:30 PM		$15+
	Music	Youth Orchestra Springtime	Great Falls	March 30	3:00 PM		$5+
Great Falls College MSU Room B 101	Literary	Symphony Preview with Grant Harville	Great Falls	February 14	12:00 PM	app.arts-people.com	Free
The History Museum	Music	Ciao Bella	Great Falls	March 14	7:00 PM		$14+
First Congregational Chruch UCC	Music	Ciao Bella	Great Falls	March 16	2:00 PM		$14+
The Newberry	Art	Chefs, Champagne, & Art	Great Falls	February 7	6:00 PM	the-square.org/events/cca2025	$75
CM Russell Museum	Art	The Russell 2025	Great Falls	March 20-22	Daily	cmrussell.org/experience/sale-events/	$60+
Heritage Inn	Art	Outwest Art show	Great Falls	March 20-22	Daily	owas.online/	Free
The Newberry	Music	Atmosphere - Imagine the Fun Tour	Great Falls	January 12	7:30 PM	thenewberrymt.com/event/	$40.50+
	Dance	United We Dance - The Ultimate Rave Experience	Great Falls	February 1	9:00 PM		$18+
	Music	Tanner Laws - Montana Country Night	Great Falls	January 18	7:30 PM		$22.50+
	Misc.	Zoso - The Ultimate Led Zeppelin Experience	Great Falls	February 8	7:30 PM		$22.50+
	Music	Kade Hoffman Presented by Smith and Rogue	Great Falls	February 14	7:30 PM		$10.00
	Music	Paper Flowers-Remembering Fleetwood Mac	Great Falls	February 21	7:30 PM		$20.70+
	Music	Hinder	Great Falls	February 23	7:30 PM		$40.50+
	Music	Umphrey's McGee	Great Falls	March 13	8:00 PM		$40.50+
Hamilton							
Hamilton Performing Arts Center	Music	Take3	Hamilton	January 15	8:00 PM	bitterrootperformingarts.org/event/	$49
	Music	JigJam	Hamilton	March 8	8:00 PM		$35+
	Music	Chicago Tap Theatre	Hamilton	March 15	8:00 PM		$49
Havre							
MSUN/MAT Theatre	Theatre & Music	Hill County Revue Too	Havre	Feb 7, 8, 14 & 15	7:30 PM	mtactors.com/shows-events/	$13+
	Theatre & Music	Oliver!	Havre	March 27-29, Apr 3-5	7:30 PM & 2:00 PM		$13+
Helena							
Lewis and Clark Library	Literary	Books & Babies	Helena	Mondays	10:30 AM	lclibrary.libcal.com/event/	Free
	Literary	Toddler Tales	Helena	Tuesdays	10:30 AM		Free
	Literary	Preschool Storytime	Helena	Wednesdays	10:30 AM		Free
	Literary	Montana Historical Society Lecture Series	Helena	Jan 16, Feb 6, 20, Mar 6 & 20	6:30 PM		Free
The Myrna Loy	Misc.	Alex Velluto	Helena	January 23	7:30 PM	themyrnaloy.com/whats-happening/	$20
	Music	Billy Childs Quartet	Helena	January 31	7:30 PM		$35
	Music	Larry & Joe	Helena	February 13	7:30 PM		$24
	Music	Arms Around America	Helena	February 27	7:30 PM		$28
	Music	JigJam	Helena	March 6	7:30 PM		$30
	Misc.	Saturday Night Live	Helena	March 12-15	7:30 PM		$28
Lewis and Clark Brewing	Music	Hell's Belles	Helena	January 31	8:00 PM	thepubstation.com/event/	$25
	Music	Red Not Chili Peppers	Helena	March 6	8:00 PM		$20
Helena Civic Center	Music	Masterworks IV: Pianist Roman Rabinovich & Prokofiev	Helena	February 22	7:30 PM	helenasymphony.org/event/	$22+
	Music	Masterworks V: Behold the Sea!	Helena	March 22	7:30 PM		$22+
Saint Paul's United Methodist Church	Music	Mozart by Candlelight	Helena	January 24 & 25	7:30 PM		$50
	Music & Theatre	Symphony Kids: The Billy Goat's Gruff	Helena	February 1	10:00 AM		Free
The Holter Musuem of Art	Art	Kalon Baughan: Mesocarnivores of Montana	Helena	Jan 17-Feb 23	Daily	holtermuseum.org/exhibitions/	$10
	Art	Christina Marian: Nowhere To Be But Here	Helena	Jan 17-Mar 30	Daily		$10
	Art	Katie Knight: What Hangs in the Balance	Helena	Jan 17-Mar 30	Daily		$10
Grandstreet Theatre	Art & Theatre	Theatre School	Helena	Jan-Mar	3:45 PM	grandstreettheatre.com/theatre-school-calendar/	TBA
Lewis and Clark County Fairgrounds	Misc.	Made in Montana Trade Show	Helena	March 7 & 8	Daily	madeinmontanausa.com/Tradeshow	Free
Kalispell							
Wachholz College Center	Music	Symphony Jazz Night	Kalispell	January 18	7:30 PM	wachholzcollegecenter.org/Online/	$44+

Kalispell *(continued)*						
	Josh Turner: This Country Music Thing Tour	Kalispell	January 23	7:30 PM		$56+
	WCC Changemaker Speaker: Kevin Fedarko	Kalispell	January 29	7:30 PM		$19.80+
	Mat Kearney: The Acoustic Trio Tour	Kalispell	January 31	7:30 PM		$39+
	The Music of Fleetwood Mac - A Tribute Concert	Kalispell	February 8	7:00 PM		$15+
	International Guitar Night	Kalispell	February 11	7:30 PM		$36+
	SPAMILTON: An American Parody	Kalispell	February 12	7:30 PM		$39+
	Glacier Symphony: Scheherezade with Les Arrivants Trio	Kalispell	February 22	7:30 PM & 3:00 PM		$44+
	The Bored Teachers Comedy Tour	Kalispell	March 6	7:30 PM		$33+
	Yonder Mountain String Band	Kalispell	March 7	7:30 PM		$45+
	R.E.S.P.E.C.T.	Kalispell	March 8	7:30 PM		$40+
	WCC Changemaker Speaker: Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner	Kalispell	March 11	7:30 PM		$18+
	Imagine: The Music of John Lennon	Kalispell	March 15	7:30 PM		$44+
	Dragons and Mythical Beasts - Live!	Kalispell	March 19	6:30 PM		$22.50+
	Grits & Glamour Tour: Pam Tillis & Lorrie Morgan	Kalispell	March 20	7:30 PM		$54+
	Alton Brown Live: Last Bite	Kalispell	March 25	7:30 PM		$60+
	Step Afrika!	Kalispell	March 26	7:00 PM		$27+
Glacier Art Museum *(Formerly Hockaday Museum of Art)*	Landscapes Reimagined: Rachel Rose & Rick Silva	Kalispell	Nov 8, 2024 - Sept 20, 2025	Daily	hockadaymuseum.com/exhibition/	Free
	Our Montana: Artist Connections to Place	Kalispell	Oct 12, 2024 - Aug 23 2025	Daily		Free
	Members Salon 2025	Kalispell	Mar 8-Apr 13	Daily		Free
Lewistown						
American Prairie National Discovery Center	Beyond Baroque-Fabulous Fanny	Lewistown	January 7	7:00 PM	baroquemusicmontana.org/concert-series/	Donation
Livingston						
Holbrook United Methodist Church	Vivaldi's Four Seasons	Livingston	January 25	7:30 PM		$5+
The Dulcie Theatre	Americana Folk	Livingston	February 15-22	7:30 PM	theshanecenter.org/all-events/	$15+
	My Fair Lady	Livingston	Feb 28-Mar 23	7:30 PM & 3:00 PM		$13+
Missoula						
St. Paul Luthern Church	Handel's Heroines	Missoula	March 30	2:30 PM	baroquemusicmontana.org/concert-series/	$5+
Missoula Public Library	2nd Wednesday Book Group	Missoula	Jan 8, Feb 12 & Mar 12	6:30 PM	missoulapubliclibrary.org	Free
	Watercolor Painting	Missoula	Fridays	12:00 PM		Free
	Storytime for 3 and older	Missoula	Saturdays	10:30 AM		Free
	Tiny Tales	Missoula	Thursdays & Fridays	10:30 AM		Free
	Middle School Writers	Missoula	Wednesdays	3:30 PM		Free
	Young Adult Writers	Missoula	Fridays	3:30 PM		Free
	Sherlock Holmes & A Musical Mystery	Missoula	January 25	10:00 AM	missoulasymphony.org/concerts/	Free
	Jane Ash Poitras: Keeping the Circle Strong	Missoula	Sept 24-Feb 6	Daily	missoulaartmuseum.org/exhibitions/current	Free
	BT Livermore: Oh, The Wait Of It All	Missoula	Sept 6-Jan 11	Daily		Free
	Auction Exhibition Closing Reception	Missoula	January 30	5:00 PM		Free
The Clay Studio of Missoula	Monday Open Instruction	Missoula	Jan 6-Mar 10	2:00 PM	theclaystudioofmissoula.org/adult-clay-education	325+
	Monday Beginning Pottery	Missoula	Jan 6-Mar 10	6:00 PM		325+
	Tuesday Open Instruction	Missoula	Jan 7-Mar 11	2:00 PM		325+
	Winter Wood Fire Class + Firing	Missoula	Jan 7-Mar 4	6:00 PM		$375+
	Winter Wood Fire Firing Only	Missoula	Jan 7-Mar 11	6:00 PM		$225+
	Wednesday Morning Beginning Pottery	Missoula	Jan 8-Mar 12	10:00 AM		325+
	Wednesday Continuing Pottery	Missoula	Jan 8-Mar 12	6:00 PM		325+
	Thursday Morning Continuing Pottery	Missoula	Jan 9-Mar 13	10:00 AM		325+
	Thursday Beginning Pottery	Missoula	Jan 9-Mar 13	6:00 PM		325+
	Imagery and Multiples in Clay	Missoula	Jan 12-Mar 16	5:00 PM		$330+
	Sunday Afternoon Beginning Pottery	Missoula	Jan 12-Mar 16	1:00 PM		325+

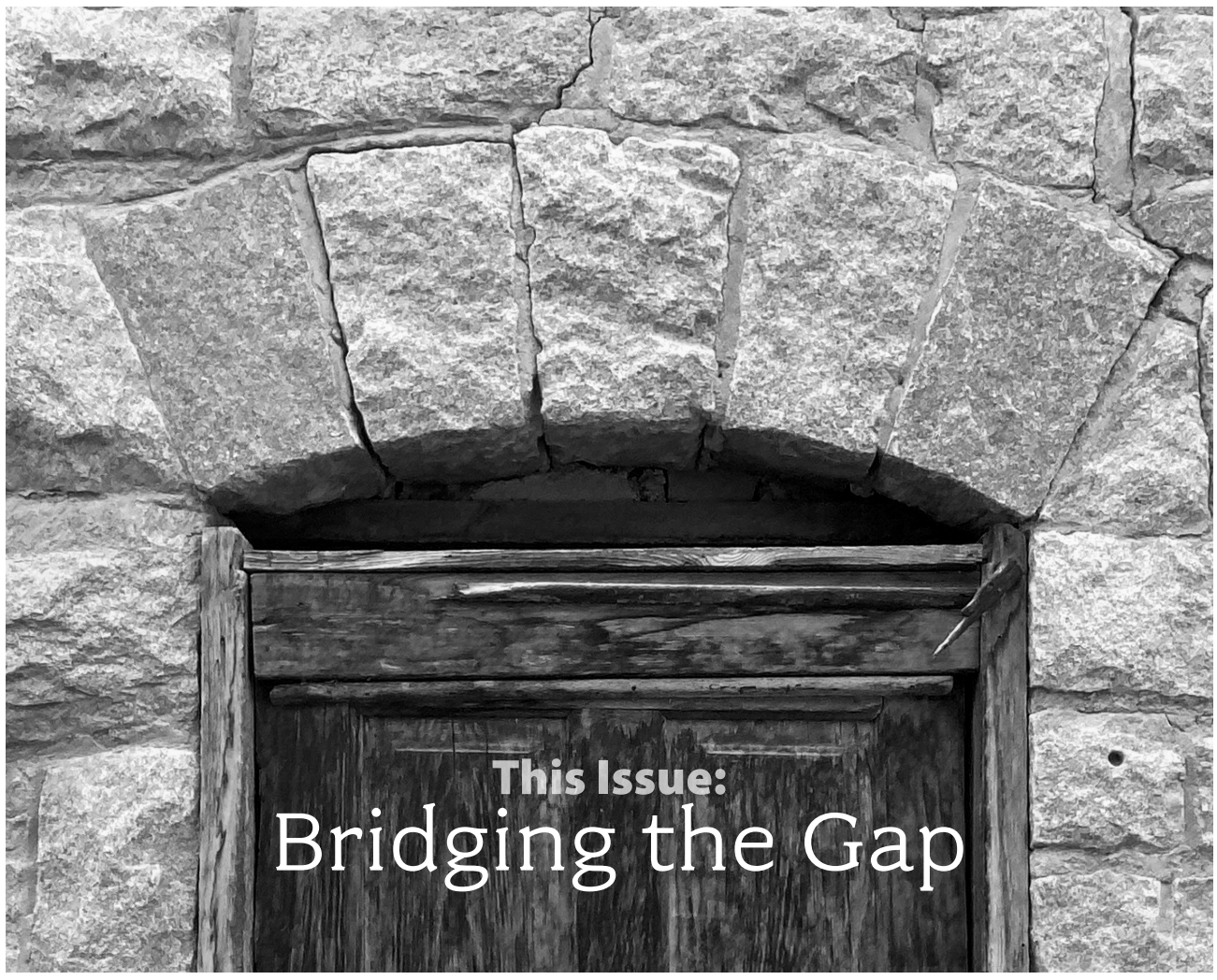
	Art	Special Workshop: Firing the Soda Kiln	Missoula	Feb 22-Mar 5	10:00 AM		$135+
The Artists Shop	Art	The Resonance of Nature by Susan Hedstrand	Missoula	Dec-Jan 2025	Daily	missoulaartistsshop.com	Free
Monk's	Music	Vittima + Fuzz Aldrin + Places Called Home	Missoula	January 31	8:00 PM	eventbrite.com	$10
	Music	Saints of Soldiers + The Damn Quails	Missoula	February 19	7:00 PM		$15
	Music	Ronnie And The Redwoods	Missoula	March 1	7:00 PM		$10
The Top Hat	Music	Shwayze	Missoula	January 23	9:00 PM	logjampresents.com/event/	$20+
	Music	Skiitour	Missoula	February 21	10:00 PM		$22+
	Music	Pokey Lafarge	Missoula	March 8	9:00 PM		$30+
The Wilma	Music	Kitchen Dwellers	Missoula	January 18	8:00 PM		$31+
	Music	Kitchen Dwellers	Missoula	January 19	8:00 PM		$31+
	Misc.	EMO Night	Missoula	February 1	8:00 PM		$18+
	Music	Hell's Belles	Missoula	February 2	8:00 PM	logjampresents.com/event/	$25+
	Music	Zoso A tribute to Led Zeppelin	Missoula	February 6	8:00 PM		$27+
	Film	Big Sky Documentary Film Festival	Missoula	February 14-23	TBA		$49+
	Music	Hinder	Missoula	February 24	7:30 PM		$30+
	Music	Railroad Earth	Missoula	February 2	8:00 PM		$27.50+
	Music	Big Richard	Missoula	March 14	8:00 PM		$25+
	Film	Fly Fishing Film Tour	Missoula	March 19	7:00 PM		$17+
	Music	Sullivan King	Missoula	March 20	7:00 PM		$29.50+
	Music	Pigeons Playing Ping Pong	Missoula	March 23	8:00 PM		$25+
Missoula Community Theatre	Theatre	Waitress	Missoula	January 16-26	2:00, 6:30 PM, 7:30 PM	mctinc.org/event/	$25+
	Theatre	Singin' in the Rain Jr.	Missoula	February 7-9	2:00, 6:30 PM, 7:30 PM		$25+
	Theatre	The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time	Missoula	March 6-16	2:00, 6:30 PM, 7:30 PM		$25+
	Theatre	Rumpelstilskin	Missoula	March 21	5:00 PM & 7:00 PM		$10+
	Theatre	The Tortoise versus the Hare	Missoula	March 28	5:00 PM & 7:00 PM		$10+
Missoula Symphony	Music	Sherlock Holmes and the Missing Maestra	Missoula	February 1	3:00 PM	missoulasymphony.org/concerts/	$10+
	Misc.	3rd Annual Whiskey, Wine & Wisdom	Missoula	February 16	6:00 PM		$150
	Music	Dance!	Missoula	March 1-2	7:30 PM & 3:00 PM		$20+
Zootown Arts Community Center	Dance	Belly Dance Showcase	Missoula	January 10	7:00 PM	showroom.zootownarts.org/event/	$12
University of Montana Theatre	Music	ACDA Benefit Concert	Missoula	February 7-8	7:30 PM	umt.edu/theatre-dance/season/	$20
	Theatre	The Importance of Being Earnest	Missoula	Feb 27-Mar 9	7:30 PM & 2:00 PM		$21+
Polson							
Polson High School	Music	Kate Voss & the Hot Sauce	Polson	February 14	7:00 PM	missionvalleylive.com/concert/	$15
	Music	The Mari Black Trio	Polson	March 21	7:00 PM		$15
Ronan							
Ronan Performing Arts Center	Music	Wylie and the Wild West	Ronan	January 17	7:00 PM		$15
Red Lodge							
Calvary Episcopal church	Music	Beyond Baroque-Fabulous Fanny	Red Lodge	January 12	4:00 PM	baroquemusicmontana.org/concert-series/	$40
Stevensville							
Stevensville Playhouse	Theatre	Improvise This	Stevensville	Jan 24-Feb 2	7:30 PM & 2:00 PM	stevensvilleplayhouse.org	$13.50+
Whitefish							
Great Northern Bar	Music	Madeline Hawthorne	Whitefish	March 7 & 8	9:30 PM	greatnorthernbar.com/music-and-specials/	$10+
	Music	Big Richard	Whitefish	March 9	9:30 PM		$20+
For Fine Art	Art	235 Our Biggest (Smallest) Annual Show	Whitefish	Dec 13-Jan 17, 2025	Daily	forfineart.com	Free
Whitefish Theatre Co	Theatre	Be Here Now	Whitefish	January 18 & 19	7:30 PM & 2:00 PM	whitefishtheatreco.org/full-2024-2025-season-1	$10+
	Misc.	Alex Velluto	Whitefish	January 24	7:30 PM		$10+
	Theatre	Shrek: The Musical!	Whitefish	Feb 21-28, Mar 1-2	4:00 PM & 7:30 PM		$10+
	Theatre	All the Days	Whitefish	March 22 & 23	7:30 PM		$10+

State of the ARTS

MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL

Winter 2025

January
February
March



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